





PYGMALION,

CHILD OF THE LAKE,

THE THREE RINGS, AND OTHER POEMS.

BY

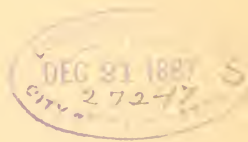
A REVEREND SISTER

OF THE ORDER OF JESUS AND MARY, AND LATE OF THE CONVENT
OF HOCHELAGA,

WITH BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

EDITED BY

MISS MAY CROSS,
CAPE VINCENT, N. Y.



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PREFACE.

THESE poems, which I now place within the reach of the Literary world, are from the pen of a much beloved teacher, and were a parting gift to me, her last pupil, but a short month before her death.

Years ago, many of them passed under the scrutinizing eye of our household poet (Longfellow), who bestowed upon them warm commendations. "The New Year," particularly, of the shorter poems, was a favorite with him, and he paid the writer many compliments for the similes with which it abounds.

Since they have been in my possession, men of learning and culture have looked into them, and I have received such encouragement that I no longer refrain from giving them the dignity of print, feeling that they are worthy of public notice, and that all those into whose hands they may fall, will read with pleasure.

I feel safe in saying that Catholics and non-Catholics can alike enjoy them ; for while they are the thoughts of one whose heart was in the Catholic Faith, there is not a word to which the Protestant heart cannot respond.

It was her intention, at one time, to publish her writings, and the introduction and dedication used in this book she prepared for a work of her own ; but health failing her, she abandoned the cherished design.

I, therefore, regard it almost a sacred duty to carry out her "dearest wish." Trusting that my effort will be attended with success, and that her poems may find favor with all lovers of verse, I fondly dedicate this little volume to her memory.

MAY L. CROSS.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

THE REVEREND SISTER, whose poems are presented in this volume, was an American by birth, and of Irish and English descent. Her father was well known in the world of letters, an intimate friend of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and a schoolmate with John G. Whittier. He became so prominent in after years, that he was the honored recipient of several gold medals for eminent services and valuable discoveries in the fields of science. The author of these poems herself enjoyed the acquaintance of the first poet, above named, and was at one time a member of a Literary Society of which he was president.

What wonder then, that in the midst of such influences and surroundings, her mind should have received the impulse which began in youth to develop into a true poetic path. At an early age, she had written some pieces, which gave promise of future ability worthy her descent, and many of her best productions were written before she entered into religious life.

The following obituary notice, taken from the columns

of the *Catholic Record*, is here given as a fitting close to this brief sketch :

OBITUARY.

Died, at the Mother House of Her Order in Hochelaga, Sister ———, in the year 1879.

“ Many of our readers will remember this estimable religious, whose field of labor for a number of years was in the convents of Sarnia and Windsor. In the lives of her numerous pupils, her pure and gentle influence will always be a thing of beauty and holiness. Those who had the pleasure of her acquaintance, will love to remember the elevation of her mind, her finely gifted nature, and the sweetness of her disposition, which knew no guile. We, her intimate friends, who were so privileged as to look into the sanctuary of her soul and admire the chaste loveliness thereof, can never forget the gentle, earnest and devoted laborer, who would not desist from her task even when Death had set his seal upon her. A touching proof of her almost superhuman strength of will to exert herself to the end is, that but a short month elapsed between the crowning of both pupils and teacher ; with this exception, however, that the laurels of the teacher, culled in the gardens of her beloved, were illumined with the light and beauty of God’s visible presence. Peace to her soul in the radiance of the Divine smile. Love and veneration to her memory.”

INTRODUCTION.

IN THE course of conversation with a nameless acquaintance, who has a predilection for hard logic and unvarnished facts, I had occasion to discuss my project of publishing, which he viewed with cold indifference, not unmingled with scorn. My stoical friend having then descanted on the supreme excellence of Shakespere, I asked his opinion whether minor poems possessing beauty, truth, fire and melody, are not only more congenial to the multitude, but have always exercised a more potent influence and benefit over mankind than even great epic and dramatic works.

He assented to this; but endeavored to assure me that poems of this class were seldom found. Not feeling any inclination to question this statement, I dropped the subject.

Now, my interview with this sternly-visaged acquaintance has suggested to me a few thoughts regarding lyrical poetry and its influence, which I shall endeavor to embody in plain prose, instead of measured couplets.

It is impossible to give an exhaustive definition of minor poems. They may be comprised under the name

of ballads, legends, songs, odes, hymns and lyrics. They are nearly all distinguished by brevity, and generally turn on an emotion, thought, incident or event.

Mr. Giles happily characterizes them, when he remarks that a simple song is like a compressed drama ; and within the circle of these songs, we have impulses from every stage of life, from the perturbations of youth to the chills of old age. All true minor poems, or shall we call them lyrics—for this word pre-supposes that which contributes to their perfection, namely, melody,—must be spontaneous, and therefore natural.

The writer must feel his thought before giving it expression. Artifice of words, pomp of metaphor, add to its beauty ; but it is the *vivida vis animi*, thrown into it, which gives it vitality and makes it enduring. Consequently, all favorite lyrics do not, as we are apt to suppose, owe their success to the caprice of the world, or to the fame of their authors. “The Burial of Sir John Moore at Corunna ” is familiar to all, but I am not aware that its composer, Charles Wolfe, was particularly celebrated as a poet. The certain distinctive excellencies, then, which, in my opinion, have made minor poems popular, are earnestness and truthfulness. They must not only proceed from the intellect, but also flow from the heart. The secret of Lord Byron’s fame, is that his thoughts glow with feeling. None of us are in love with his preachings, his morals, philosophy, or morbid views of mankind ; but the impassioned melody, and particularly the fervid warmth of his words, awake our sympathies and excite our emotions, until we are apt to exclaim : “ O that this genius had possessed the piety of Cowper and the philo-

sophy of Montgomery, and these gentlemen the genius of Byron !”

There is an anecdote related of George II, who, being asked to patronize the poets, only cursed them, remarking, that, “they were all a set of mechanics.” I am afraid his remarks apply to many of our modern wooers of the muse. We have in our midst a deal of vague, musty poetry, which requires a concentration of our faculties to understand and appreciate; fine, intellectual, mechanical compositions, which might as well have been written in prose. But a true poem, as I comprehend the matter, ought to thrill and arrest the mind on perusing it. Aristotle, more than two thousand years ago, informed us, that a poet must either possess frenzy or art. A minor poem, all art, is merely “a sad mechanical exercise.” A minor poem, all frenzy, with little or no art, must reach and move our sensibilities, and thus fulfill the purpose for which it was composed. In my opinion, mediocrity may be tolerated in a poem imbued with real and not sham feeling, in spite of Horace’s assertion to the contrary: Thus, good lyrics excite the common heart of humanity, because they contain,

“ The music to whose tone,
The common pulse of man keeps time,
In cot or castle’s mirth or moan,
In cold or sunny clime.”

Long descriptive, dramatic, or epic poems, from their very length will only find their fit and few audiences. The higher poetry will prove a joy forever to cultivated minds; but lyrics that have a perfection commensurate with their

aim, a finish in proportion to brevity, which are either simple, sensuous, or passionate, are common to all ages and all times, and by awakening man's loftier impulses and purer emotions, "fade not into the light of common day," but like the soul from which they proceed, and the imperishable forms of nature herself, are unchangeable and eternal.

It is sometimes asked, whether there is not sufficient lyrical poetry in the world for now, and for all time; and also, if it is not vain and presumptuous for anyone to attempt to increase the store, particularly when that someone has not received the poets "awful crown," as Gerald Massey terms it. This question is easily answered. Everything in nature and art, and in the mind of man, is forever being reproduced. The pansies of the garden were once the violets of the woods. The variegated tulip was originally of an unmixed simple color; yet the distinctive peculiarities of these, like all flowers, are the same now as when Eve in the Garden of Eden, stooped, as Milton tells us,

" To support
Each flower of slender stock, whose head, tho' gay,
Carnation, purple, azure, or speck'd with gold,
Hung drooping unsustained."

So, the lyrical impulse dies not with man's death, but is perpetually taking new forms and phases, or modifications of old forms; and this faculty is enlarged, with the march of intellect, the progress of civilization, and the increase of refinement.

As knowledge spreads itself, our poetry becomes fuller

and truer. "If," says Charles Kingsley, "Pope had been alive now, he would have written his 'Dunciad' much better." Cervantes bears out my assertion when he remarks, "Poetry, I regard as a tender virgin, young and extremely beautiful, whom divers other virgins, namely all the other sciences, are assiduous to enrich, to polish and adorn. She is to be served by them, and they are to be ennobled through her."

Tennyson's passages descriptive of English scenery in "In Memoriam," outrival those in the "Seasons," because our modern bard, with deeper learning and finer instincts, has penetrated into the very heart of the landscape, and his poetry not being disfigured by false conceits arising from defective knowledge, is truer and more perfect. The first half of this present century is rich in lyrics, and judging from the numerous array of singers around us, the latter half gives promise of finer songs than heretofore. It is, therefore, idle to assert, that the harp and lyre of Apollo can ever be silent, or the harpers lose command over the strings and produce new combinations of melody no more. As long as the mysterious heart of man beats in joy, or is dulled with grief, as long as the eternal glory and goodness of the Creator fill him with awe, and the infinite variety, grandeur and beauty of His creations inspire him with love, from a necessity in his nature he will ever give expressions to "thoughts too deep for tears," which will often naturally take a lyrical form.

Now, the desire and the faculty are seldom equal. The instinct which bids us write our ideas, and the power which gives them utterance, are rarely in the same relation. All who write verses are not poets, and many dream

beautiful thoughts, and yet can never impart them, and so these silent singers,

——“die with all their music in them.”

Still, amid the profusion of verses scattered everywhere and anywhere, how much is hidden, like violets under mossy stones, which, if brought to light and in places where they could be understood, would not bring fame and honor to its authors.

Every writer of verse, then, does so from a pure necessity, to satisfy a hidden craving after the beautiful. He cannot help it. He spins his thoughts, like the spider weaves his web, from impulse. It is, in fact, a growth of his mind, like the leaves of a tree. It never occurs to the writer, that he or she may only be inditing feeble common-place, or, in the powerful language of Mrs. Browning,

“What, make believe,
With so much earnest ! What effete results,
From virile efforts ! What cold wire-drawn odes,
From such white heats !”

And very often the higher the idea aimed at, the more worthless its form ; and so the set of verses conceived in true spirit, turns out to be spiritless. We cannot embody our dream. The plan is seemly and noble, but the execution proves a failure. Well, supposing that such be the case, what matter ? Let us console ourselves with the reflection that imperfection must mix itself with all human effort, and say, in the philosophy of Hawthorne, “I am afraid that a sense of shortcoming must always be the reward and punishment of those who try to grapple with a great and beautiful idea. It only proves that we

have been able to imagine things, too high for mortal faculties to execute."

Having thus unburdened, I hope not too presumptuously, my beliefs regarding minor poems, I beg to present my own trifles of verse.

I have no excuse to offer for their appearance ; no remarks about early efforts and kind indulgences, and all those sham apologies so common to prefaces in books. None of them may reach my own ideal of a true Lyric ; still, the few that have been published, have already won the kindly notice—I hope deserved—of many an unknown friend, and not a few poetical critics. Therefore, without fear, I have collected them from a host of others, written from time to time. As a number have floated about the country, leading a vagabond and precarious existence, in odd corners of newspapers, and in strange nondescript collections of poetry, I certainly feel justified in gathering within my fold ; in placing within a certain compass, all those pieces that I care to acknowledge now, together, with other manuscripts, which have never attained the dignity of print. It is my dearest wish that the magnates of criticism should look into them ; and if their verdict, in spite of certain honied approval, should prove unfavorable, I shall endeavor to sin no more in rhyme.

In the meantime, thanking fervently all those whose words of encouragement have been my sweetest satisfaction, I launch my little venture on the broad, variable sea of public opinion, freighted with the usual hope attending all human projects ; while I patiently await the issue, if there is ever to be one—or, if such is to be its fate, calmly enduring the forgetfulness of a busy world, engrossed with its own visions and regrets.

DEDICATION.

In trust—in love—I lay
My lowly offerings, Mother, at thy feet,
All that my heart for years has fancied sweet,
My songs from day to day.

Accept them, for they are
The hopeful thoughts of many a lonely hour,
When every other balm had lost its power
To still life's fret and jar.

For every fervent line,
Syllabled amid dull worldly strife,
Whispered sweet hope and solace, till my life
Seemed tinged with hues divine.

Broken, and few, and faint,
I give them to thy keeping, to thy care,
So that thy love around them everywhere,
May free them from earth's taint.

If thy unselfish love,
O, Mother ! were attuned to rhythmic song,
The melody would ever roll along
And reach the skies above.

So, keep these homely lays,
For they are all my life can give thee now ;
And tho' the world's neglect may bend me low,
I only wait thy praise.

Not for their doubtful worth
Accept them ; only glean the love that lies
Hidden among the feeble melodies,
Like springs within the earth.

And tho' the faults abound
Numerous as shells within the sea ;
Thy love will make the rhyme and harmony,
To fill them with sweet sound.

I, then, no more would ask :
Let Fame's uproarious trumpet herald forth,
The poet's loftier music thro' the earth,
Be mine a sweeter task.

To sing the songs of home,
When dove-eyed Truth with torch of vestal light,
Has lit the fire upon the hearth at night,
Hallowing its sacred dome.

Or when the sunny eyes
Of Innocence have beamed upon my heart,
Till the loved children's glances seemed a part
Of looks in Paradise.

Vague fancies of my brain,
And visions which my heart yearned to express,
Which seemed o'ertinted with strange loveliness
Shining thro' mists and rain.

Vain griefs that idly flow,
Which memory longed in rhythmic speech to tell,
Thy love can fathom and interpret well,
And give them meaning now.

These song-buds scant, of mine,
May ripen and may blossom into flowers,
When e'er thy dear approval richly dowers,
Each thought with smiles of thine.

Therefore, in joy, I lay
This book of verses fondly at thy feet,
So that thy voice may make these voices sweet,
Where'er they chance to stray.

PYGMALION.



THE THREE RINGS.

“PYGMALION.”

“What fine chisel,
Could ever yet cut breath?”—*Winter's Tale.*



B AUNTED with one idea, he had no
peace ;

At first, a cloudy speck, that paced
his mind,

Until it slowly grew to great dimen-
sions.

It close beset him in his wakefulness,
It entered in the vision of the night
Until he reeled and staggered with its weight.
At first, a misty shape, as undefinable
As racks of storm-cloud in a distant sky ;
Then, taking form and outline in his mind,
It stood revealed, a beautiful conception.

Taking a marble block to carve his dream,
The Sculptor—hot with eagerness—intent
To chisel loveliness from callous stone—

Frigid as glaciers on the Alpine Hills—
His dark eyes flashing forth an inner light
Reflected from the visions in his soul,
Began the self-imposed and wondrous task.
The hot noon glared upon him, as he struck
The shapeless block and made deformity,
Rough, uncouth, more hideous seem
In contrast with the splendor of his thought.
The dusty splinters, like a shower of hail,
Flew madly round, until the ambient air
Trembled with reverberating shocks of sound,
Like pine wood crackling 'neath an angry flame.
The keen-edged chisel never swerved ; anon
The worker paused and stared upon his work,
Upon the clefts and fissures of the stone—
Like one aroused from blissful dream, who shakes
The slumber from his eyes, nor yet perceives
The cold reality of wakefulness.

But soon the resolute purpose nerved his arm,
The arm that never flagged, except it dropped
In weariness ;—and when night trod the earth,
And with her dusky splendor folded all,
Her sanctity and beauty sent a hush

Within the sculptor's soul, imbued his sleep
With lovely shapes, that bore a perfect semblance
To what he sought to carve from shapeless stone.

The busy days, made earnest with his task,
And sunned with light of joyous effort,
Glided like dimpled waves upon a sea.
And soon there slowly issued from the block
A rolling mass of locks, that curled and coiled,
Like to a maze of wild and hardy vines—
In folds of rich luxuriance ; these the sun
Glimmered upon, and made them golden tinted.
Then, wrapt in dream, the sculptor lovingly
Touch't a burnished tress, and in his joy
The hue and gloss was real ! until the chill,
Piercing his heart, disturbed the phantasy.
Like one who in the gay and flaunting world
With death and awful woe stands face to face,
Transfixed aghast in sad and solemn awe,
So stood the worker stern and motionless.
The real did smite his sweet ideal to dust ;
Or else a thought was thrust upon him then,
That human effort, earnest and severe,
May prove a bitter failure, or else lack

The recompense which vigorous toil should yield.
He did not moan complaint, nor fold his hands
In idleness, desponding listlessly,
But fixed his inward gaze upon the end,
Upon the full completion of his aim ;
And so his large desire stifled doubt
And vivified his almost halting purpose,
And when along the east crept the pale dawn,
Dim with a wealth of glory unrevealed,
A perfect brow, unsullied, without fleck—
Spotless as virgin lilies, when they bloom
Alone, upon the margin of a lake,
Where soilure cannot mar their purity—
Rose from the stone ; the calm and majesty
Of intellect dwelt in its loftiness,
As if locked within its silent depths
Intelligence divine, or wondrous thought
Of that fine quality and subtle texture
Dowered to woman ; while the waves of hair
Clung to the head in graceful fold and curl,
And wrapt, and nearly hid the clear-cut ear
Impearled as undulating as a shell.
A delicate arch of forehead stamped a grace
Upon the chiseled front ; that might have been

Fit dwelling place for aspirations high,—
A pure, unconscious seat of lovely hopes,
To soar, and chasten all they touch upon.
Like one surprised at sudden joyful news,
The sculptor gazed entranced upon his work ;
A blissful consciousness of sure success,
The certain progress of a high endeavor,
Beautified and warmed with seeming life,
The cold resemblance of his marvelous dream.
A secret joy, quivering in his heart,
And throbbing in his veins, flashed in his eyes,
And all the thrilling tumult bursting forth,
With rush impetuous, found a sudden vent
In a wild kiss upon the marble brow.

The short-lived ecstasy in flame expired ;
And calmer, as he brooded o'er the end,
He clutched the chisel with a sense of power ;
And soon the eyes, blank, fixed, yet beautiful,
Folded in sleep, as if the perfect hush
Of even-tide in summer—when the flowers
Drowse in blissful languor—lay upon them,
Shadowed his dream ; again an aching sense
Of tortuous incompleteness in his work,

Like a dim gath'ring portent which disturbs,
Imbued his mind with vague uneasiness.
The icy blankness of the eyes, like death,
Dulled the sweet marvel of their perfect shape,
And cast a baleful shade upon his thought.
His doubt soon broadened to a dark distrust ;
And so he fled his task and sought the night.
No fretful scowl disturbed her brow serene;
Her darkness veiled the light of countless worlds
Rolling in space, in paths illimitable ;
Her awful gloom revealed sublimity,
As if God's glory shadowed all the earth.
And so the solemn dark invoked a calm
Within his soul ; and the vague riotous doubts,
Like fading mists that upward roll to Heaven,
Were lost in reverential awe and prayer.

And soon a delicate curve of nostril arched,
Defined with subtle sensitiveness to breathe
The faintest exhalations of the flowers,
And yet, superbly moulded, curved in pride,
As if it bore patrician's lofty stamp,
Dwelt on the stone. Then slowly rose the mouth,
Whose closed lips were richly rounded off,

And full of pouting, dimpled loveliness,
They seemed as if a touch of love might warm
Their chilly aspect with the sweets and glow
Of rose-buds waking to the breath of June !
Or if the gushing trill of summer birds,
Piercing the fervid air with notes of bliss,
Might stir their rigidness in sympathy
To pour aloud a maiden's sparkling song.
And, as 'tis said, the truest harmony,
The elixir of all music—is a sound,
That issues from the growing forest trees,
The mellowed loveliness upon the face,
Advanced in absolute perfection,
And ripening in the curves upon the chin,
Sent to a sculptor's eager, charmed ear,
Faint chords of dreamful music ; so she rose,
And wonder-stricken, wrapt in ecstasy,
Met the dim Twilight braided with a woof
Of shadowy splendor, blending with her smile,
The passionate blaze of sundown in the sky
To a calm haze—which made the stillness sweet.
The gaunt and misty shadows of the woods,
The soft, pale outlines of the slumberous trees,
Took new and sweeter aspects from the dream

Imaged upon the stone ; and tremulous sounds
Of lispings waterfalls were toned with joy ;
And the pale evening bared her gentle heart,
And mutely sympathized with human thought,
Enfolding deeper calm around his soul.

And when the jocund morning veiled the night,
And sat enthroned upon the dome of heaven,
To scatter dewy pearls and viewless sweets
Upon the awaiting earth, the rounded lines
Of blue-capped mountains in ethereal skies,
Reflecting gracefulness upon his mind,
Inspired his dream to mould upon the stone
The wavy beauty of the regal neck,
Superbly and yet delicately arched.
The rounded fullness of the ripening breast,
Half hidden 'mid a flow of drapery ;
The rich voluptuous outlines of the arms,
Which rose and fell in perfect curvatures,
Until they tapered to the dainty hands,
So finely shaped and exquisitively small
That 'twixt their grasp they might have fitly held
The unseen odor winging from a flower
Before its myriad molecules fill the air.

And as the worker neared his final aim,
The dizzy rapture of accomplishment
Fired his arm to unremitting toil ;
And, like a miser clutching at his hoard,
He wrapt his gaze upon the marbled dream,
Folding the sweet assurance to his soul
Of its reality ; then plodded on
With woman's patience of minute detail.
And sacred Love, which clothes unseemly shapes
With loveliness divine, infused a charm
Unutterable upon the limbs unfolding,
And glorified and freed the chiseled dream
From the thick trammels of the sculptor's thought,
Enveloping with angel sanctity
And draping with a fine harmonious grace,
The image which stood forth complete,
In perfect loveliness of womanhood.

And as in olden times unlettered men,—
With vague and mystic faith, undimmed
By mazy doubts of creeds—paid reverence
To the great source of light, the sculptor knelt
With silent awe before the imaged dream,
And so, he worshiped ; till beneath his gaze

It seemed to grow more pure, and lovelier.
And soon his homage merged to passionate love,
Which took a deeper root within his soul,
Asserting dominant sway, and making all
Subservient to its strange subduing power.
But when the burden of his mighty love
Made him as speechless as the pulseless stone,
And drove him to it in a phrenzied fume,
To lock the frigid hands within his own—
To seal his lips upon the cold, chaste brow,
The icy marble, like a serpent's fangs
Pierced his lone heart with a sense of crushing pain ;
And when the pallid dawn encompassed earth,
It goaded to despair his racking thought—
For the dumb, senseless block of loveliness,
Which never could impart return of love,
Seemed in its aspect to his désolate soul
Cold as a murderous thought, or white as Hate
Awaking to revenge, and blank as scorn,
If scorn's unlovely stare could ever last.
But when lone midnight's hush was audible
And beat responsive to the sculptor's heart,
A low voice murmured to his troubled soul
Like gentle winds upon a turbid sea :

“ The golden sunbeams warmed with heaven’s glow,
Can never give what God can only give ;
No passionate look can make the marble breathe ;
No human ardor kindles stone to life ;
The summer rains and fervid heats, in vain
Beat on a desert, sterile waste of sand,
Which can not yield a blade of living green—
Man fashions stone, but God bestows the soul.
Art coldly smiles, the spirit warmly speaks,
And imperfection’s taint which clings to man,
The mildew on his narrow heart and mind,
Mingles with all his deeds and mars their worth ;
The soul alone imparts their loveliness.”

And as the murmur blended with his dream
The sculptor hungered for the heavenly soul,
To make the cold perfection dream and live;
To fill the senseless block with light divine,
So that dumb loveliness might speak and wake
To rapturous life. In vain he breathed his prayer.
No blushing warmth of life stole o’er the face,
Sweet as the tint upon an apple bloom,
Or touched the pouting lips with ruby glow.
No lustrous eyes revealed a tenderness,
Or flashed responsive radiance to his love.

The marble image stood a monument
Of dead perfection, lovely loveliness,
Devoid of all which gives a human thought
An infinite beauty and a charm divine.



THE THREE RINGS.



UN days of old, once lived a mighty king,
Whose power rested in pure deeds of
love,
Whose goodness yielded him a wealth
of fame
And reverence, which spread through-
out the earth.

He owned a ring, whose gems emitted light
As lovely as his own unsullied life ;
And which contained two virtues in itself,
Passing and resting in the one who wore it ;
To win the love of Heaven to man, the first ;
To gain the love of human kind, the other.
Its lustre made all earthly glory dim,
All pomp of grandeur fade in nothingness—
And like an angel's gift bestowed on man,

He prized it for its sacred, marvelous worth.
And when the ancient king laid by his crown,
And passed from men, he gave the gem to him
The most deserving of the sacred gift,
The son beloved best for truth and virtue ;
And through unnumbered ages, every king
Bequeathed it to the pure of heart, the prince
Whose lovely life, unstained, relumed the gift,
And made it, in the sight of God and man,
A jewel, perfect as an infant's smile.

It happened once, a blameless monarch lived
And loved three sons, who seemed to him alike
Girded in righteousness and purity ;
Their sturdy manhood tempered with the grace
Of gentle manners, and benevolent speech,
And all the high adornments of the mind,
Which give to fallen man a majesty,
Superber than magnificence of courts.
Their quiet virtues wound themselves around
The rugged heart of him who wore the crown,
Like soft-hued climbing flowers, when they fold
Their loveliness around a gnarled tree.
But when the solemn years advanced apace,

And touched the righteous king with calms of age,
There crept upon him 'wildering hesitance.
Clear-sighted and deliberate in all
That tried his judgment, or inspired his mind,
A mighty problem blurred his lucid vision ;
He knew not who deserved the wondrous gift,
Since every child to him was all deserving.
A storm of troubled thoughts perplexed his days,
And bowed his gait and made his manhood droop,
Until the natural wisdom of his years
Unloosed the tangled woof of 'wildering doubt.
Since his great love could never dwindle down
To narrowing scope of partiality,
He made resolve to leave each son the gift ;
And to an artificer sent the ring,
To fashion cunningly two counterparts,
Alike in dazzling gems and outward form ;
And they were wrought so true that none discerned
The subtle jewel from the counterfeits.

And soon the monarch's lingering years rolled on,
And died in music of remembered deeds,
Whose reverberations swept throughout the land,
Infusing breath of pure harmonious love.

But, when the princes found themselves possessed
Each of the marvelous ring, there rose a cry
Of wonder ; then a baleful shadow crossed
And dulled their happy days, as when a cloud
Loaded with thunder, blots the summer sky ;
And wrangling jealousy pierced every heart,
For each affirmed his ring contained the charm,
And so ignoble rivalry brought forth
Its bitter fruitage, till love's placid stream
Was darkened with the scum of discontent.
Their clamor jarred the peaceful atmosphere
And echoed o'er the land, until the strife
Fell as a blight upon its happiness.

In this fair kingdom dwelt a hoary sage,
Renowned for wisdom and for mighty lore ;
Time's shadowy knowledge was to him a book,
Clear, open as the sun betwixt the clouds ;
For he had sifted from the cobwebbed past
The essence of all wisdom, which is truth.
And when the people wrangled, and their cause
Engendered spleen and rancour, he adjudged
Their stormy rights to vindicate the truth
In such calm flowing might of eloquence,

That he could change their petty hates to love ;
And his name was revered throughout the land,
As highest counselor and judge supreme.

So, maddened with the turmoil of dispute,
The princes sought the chamber of the seer,
To ask his counsel and implore the truth.
Then in his presence thus the elder spoke :
“ My father owned a ring, whose occult charm
Could win the grace of God and love of man ;
And when that strange transition state, which links
The narrow present to the boundless future,
Dropt, like a blessed calm, upon his soul,
He gave the jewel to me, but afterwards,
When Heaven contained his spirit—earth, his dust—
With foul pretense, my brothers claimed the prize,
And mocked me with their counterfeits. O, Sage !
With thy true vision, show the perfect ring,
So may thy wisdom prove their vanity.”
Then having ceased, with sudden impulse swayed,
He placed it near the presence of the sage.
And then, the prince the next in years thus spoke :
“ O, Seer ! a baseless dream has spanned
My brothers’ vision, so that spurious gems

Upon them flash, with subtle loveliness ;
For I can swear the mystic gift was mine.
But thy clear mind which penetrates all truth,
Can well detect the genuine ring."

He closed.

Then spoke the youngest prince :
And near the jewel laid his own.

" A noxious air,—

A pestilential vapor of the marsh,—
Has filled and blurred my brothers' sense
With bodiless imaginings—to me
My father gave his affluence of love,
The mighty largess of his boundless love,
Which died not with his death, but was infused
Into the sacred relic—left to me,—
A talisman to bless and glad my life
With virtues like his own ; thy sure decree
Will prove the certain truth of my assertion."
And as the echo of his words died out,
He cast the ring beside its counterparts.
And then the frosted sage, all-wise, supreme,
Calm with the majesty of inward strength—
Proud in the consciousness of earnest truth—
Upon the gems fixed a deep, searching gaze,

As penetrating as the looks of those
Who sought to read a man's petty destinies,
In the far infinite depths of solemn stars,
And thus gave vent to speech :

“ O marvelous ring !

Imbued with strange magnetic influence,
To win the grace of God, and love of man,
Speak and disclose thyself to human ken.
Divulge the mighty secret of thy being,
And shame thy base, ignoble counterfeits
So that thy voice may reach thy true possessor.”
The people gathering round in strange suspense
Heard the appeal; for lo ! a sudden calm
Infused their hotly beating hearts ; intent,
They gazed upon the rings, like famished men,
Whose eager eyes are strained upon far land,
Which seems to loom upon the dreary sea.
That moment seemed of infinite duration,—
And yet no voice appeased their anxiousness ;
The mystic ring, dumb as unlettered stone
Upon an unknown grave, betrayed no utterance.
Then spoke the truth-inspired sage once more :
“ O brothers ! dear to him, whom all revered,
Whose large affection, boundless as the skies

Infolded ye with strength of piety,—
With virtues emanating from his love,
Reflected from the light that shone on ye,—
Cast forth the fretful rancours in your hearts.
Like Sampson, blind and bound and powerless,
Bereft of all which gave him wondrous might,
In helplessness ye grovel on the earth ;
Shorn of the strength of ever-enduring love,
Your narrow range of vision cannot grasp
The natural wonder of the sacred gifts.
Your wrangles shame your birth, your knaving hates,
Like loathsome worms, which pierce within the earth
The roots of flowers,—blight the heart of truth.
The secret of the rings belongs to God ;
In æons yet to be,—when rusts of faith
Are blown abroad, and tarnish nevermore
With shifting doubts and error, human lives,
And wisdom makes the intellect supreme,
To clear the soul from taint of prejudice ;
And deeper insight in the care of things
Ingrafts the seeds of truth within the mind.
When man's true nature is enlarged and free,
Fit to receive and know God's perfect truth,—
The mystery of the rings shall be revealed.

Till that far blissful era, yet to be,
O princes ! take your rings as heretofore,
And wear the sacred relics sacredly,
To purge the evil tempers from your hearts ;
Guard well your thoughts ; let never breath of wrong
Tarnish the beauty of your daily deeds.
Temper your actions with sweet accord
Of gentlest courtesy, inspiring love.
Be true to all ; despise not any man,
For none may know the great or small, since God
Has given to each a place and quality.
Open the inner chambers of your souls,
So that fair-winged hopes may enter fast,
And there infuse an everlasting hope
In manhood's goodness and the Almighty's love,
And in the transient now and endless future ;
And keep your rings as emblems of your faith.
Then, surely, each will prove an angel's gift ;
Your lives embuing them with subtle charm,
Illuming them with radiance divine,—
The strange magnetic and yet natural power,
To win the grace of God and love of man.

ECHOES OF THE SEASONS.

“ Our minds shall drink at every
pore the spirit of the season.”

WORDSWORTH.

NEW YEAR.



HEAR in the depths of fancy
The close of a dying sound,
Like the faintest moan of a passing
breeze,
That sweeps the wintry ground.

I see in the depths of fancy
A glimmer of waning light,
Like the pallid ray of twilight
That fades on the brow of night.

I feel in the depths of being
That the voice and light are gone,
And only a fitful memory
From the shadowy year is born.

For all its glory and meaning,
And beautiful rainbow glow,
Are cold as the far-off starlight,
And pale as the passionless snow.

Like foam that wastes on the sea-beach,
Like surf that breaks on the shore,
The changeful days of the faded year
Have vanished forevermore.

Consumed are their beauty and sadness,
And all their sweetness and grace ;
They have passed away in the void of the past,
Like shooting stars in space.

But the transient year as it dieth,
A new-born glory gives ;
We touch the hem of its shadowy skirt,
And feel that its beauty lives.

In the lovelier hope of a brighter dawn,
Up-springing from death and night,
The dazzling glow of another year
That breaks upon our sight.

O golden promise ! that lights the dust
Of harsh discordant days,
The aching void within our hearts
Is gilden with your rays.

O light ! that vivifies and warms,
Yield us a will and power
To wrest the utmost good we can
From every new-born hour.

Search the waste places of our souls,
And scatter to the past,
The cobwebbed doubts that made the days
So drear and overcast.

Pierce the lone chambers of the heart :
If truth and faith are there,
Their rays shall round our lives with joy,
And sanctify the air.

A SEARCH FOR SPRING.

In the dewy breath of the passionate breeze,
In the twitter of early melodies,
In the bounding pulse of fern and tree,
Quickened to new-born ecstasy ;
In the soft young grass upon the sod,
In the flower that oped its eyes to God,
 • I sought the joy of Spring.

As the warm, sweet winds rushed over the earth,
And bloom and beauty and song had birth,
And leaves struggled forth in the light of morn,
Like a child's glad hopes in their primal dawn,
And the hearts of the buds throbbed with waking
 bliss,
At the touch of the sunlight's burning kiss,
 I felt the joy of Spring.

But the odorous gales changed to sultry air,
And the balm was lost in the summer glare.
O'er nature's expanse crept a laziness
And a leaden calm grew from throbbing bliss ;
And Autumn scattered decay and blight,
And in the chill of the Winter's night,
I lost the joy of Spring.

But far from the smiles of nature, apart
In the secret depths of a human heart,
Were bloom and beauty that have no death,
And change not with Time's corroding breath ;
In blossoms of Truth—pure buds of Heaven—
Tho' marred with error and weeds and leaven,
I see the joy of Spring.

In the grandeur that makes man divine,
The light of Spring seems ever to shine ;
In the beauty of goodness exalting our life,
In the perfect faith that is born of strife,
In hopes that are brighter than vernal flowers,
Whose sweetness gladdens life's common hours,
I know the joy of Spring.

A MADRIGAL.

Open the window, darling,
And welcome the breath of Spring,
For the spirit of joy is abroad,
And gladdens each sentient thing ;
My heart is drear as the wintry earth,
Shrouded in bleakest night,
But thou canst banish its frosted cares,
Spirit of Love and Light !

Open the window, darling,
I hear the gush of a song,
That comes from the beautiful Spring-time,
Flitting, like Hope, along :
My heart is sad as an Autumn morn,
Before the Winter's blight,
But thou canst scatter its sorrowful mists,
Spirit of Joy and Light !

Open the window, darling,
For nature's heart is glad ;
There is no space on this jubilant earth
For memories drear and sad ;
Our God may temper, with shades of woe,
The hour's silvery flight,
But thou canst cheer the drooping soul,
Spirit of Hope and Light !

Open the window, darling,
The air which roams abroad,
Life-giving, pure, and fragrant,
Is surely a breath from God :
Love me with all thy sweetness,
And cast forth into the night
The joyless thought in my soul,
Vernal Spirit of Light !

MAY-TIME.

On earth was a mist and torpor,
In our hearts the winter's chill,
And nature expectant for May-time,
With wearisome watching was still ;
When odorous south winds came freighted
With messages sweet from warm skies,
And the beauty and flush of the May-time
Startled all with a joyous surprise !

A lute-sounding voice in the woodland,
A whisper that swells to trill,
As the wandering birds pipe their joyance
In the land that is dear to them still.
On the boughs are the dead leaves of **Autumn**,
Like regrets, in the May-time of man ;
New tendrils may sprout, birds may carol,
But there's always a leaf sere and wan.

The musical shower of rain-drops,
Is laden with warmth strangely sweet,
That wakens the buds from their torpor,
And quickens dead grass at our feet.
O beauty, unfolding from darkness !
O life, bursting forth from decay !
Earth's type of the Godly immortal,
Soaring free from the dross and the clay.

The river has broken its cerements,
Its corpse-like beauty has fled,
With throes like the starts of a maniac,
It lashes the ice from its bed ;
Its breast seems upheaving its vengeance,
For shackles the winter laid on,
As it fearlessly breaks every barrier
With the force of a Phlegethon.

O prodigal sunshine of hay-time !
Rejoicing, we look in thy noon,
And our hearts, like the wandering robins,
Shall warble a rapturous tune :
The sadness of Autumn has faded,
The dearth of the winter has gone,

And our souls, like the young birds are thrilling
With hopes and with joys newly-born.

Let the ice round the heart melt and vanish,
Dispel the crabbed wisdom of years,
And cherish the yearning that came from
Our May-time of smiles and of tears ;
And flowers shall bloom 'neath the snow-drifts,
And toil-stricken man hope again ;
So the songs and the joys of the May-time
Need not speed to this sad world in vain.



THE ELIXIR OF SPRING.

Not in the bloom and music
That haunt the south wind's breath,
For the bloom may fade at midnight,
And the music be stilled in death ;
Not in the bursting fragrance
Of leaf, or bud, or flower,
For their beauty may be nipped and chilled
By the frosts of a single hour.

But in my darling's heart,
Nestled in sunlight there,
Spring's spirit dwells apart
From Heaven, and earth, and air ;
Purer than vernal fragrance,
Brighter than vernal skies,—
In my darling's truth and beauty,
There's Spring that never dies.

A SUMMER'S DAY.

It rose upon the shadowy earth,
 Imbued with light and melody ;
In gorgeous pride it hovered forth
 To touch the soul with ecstasy.

Its fervid strength, its marvelous grace,
 The rich, full sweetness of its love
The lowly heart could dimly trace,
 Shadowed below : mirrored above.

And in the deepening gulfs of blue,
 Or in the knolls of grassy sod,
Beyond, beneath, he felt and knew,
 The wonders of Eternal God.

The ceaseless whirl of jubilant life,
 The wind that rustled through the grain,

Seemed lisplings, in a happy strife
To worship where His love doth reign.

The fretted sunbeams smile and sleep,
And touch bare clefts of rock with light,
Nigh where dim shadows crouch and creep,
Moveless and dark, as stilly night.

And clad in wild, luxuriant charms,
In dark and solemn majesty,
The mountain peaks uplift their arms,
Unshaken as the eternal sky.

And a wild, vagrant, foaming stream
Pours its thick murmurs far and wide,
Like far-off voices, when they seem
So vaguely sweet at eventide.

、 Nigh to a lake, whose calm and grace,
And hush and darksome peacefulness,
Is like a tearful, happy face,
Sad with excess of speechless bliss.

And as the summer day doth shake
 Its light, and bloom, and sweets abroad,
Its glory nature seems to take
 Among the summer hills of God.

And as it wanes in dazzling dress,
 And on the earth dim splendor throws,
The shadow of its beauteousness,
 Doth sanctify its radiant close.



SUMMER CALM.

The calm that follows, when the air
With gushing melody is rent,
Seems to surround me everywhere,
And makes the silence eloquent.

The dying cadence of a tune
In echoes seems to float along,
Imparting to the summer noon
The lulling sweetness of a song.

Above, the deepening azure bends,—
A firmament of endless space ;
On earth, the summer glory blends
Its calmed loveliness and grace.

A twitter in the silent air
Of some wild bird that finds no rest,

Like a drear thought that comes to stir
And rack with pain the peaceful breast.

The festooned arms of shrub and tree
Droop in their beauty on the sod,
And waving elms in majesty
Flash in the sunshine of their God.

The firs and pines, a brotherhood,
Green with the summers that have flown,
Lend to the perfect quietude
A hallowed beauty of their own.

A lazy river glides along,
Like the pure calm that threads the life
Of one who cannot dream of wrong,
Nor heeds the world's surrounding strife.

A beauty sleeps within the dells ;
Along the undulating shore,
A drifting calm of summer dwells,
That seems to dull the river's roar.

The incense of the fields goes forth
Lightly and fleetly ; like a bliss
That noiseless wends upon our path,
And leaves no trace of weariness.

And so the over-joyous hours,
Linked with sweet calms throughout the day,
Droop like the fading summer flowers,
And float in twilight calm away.

'Tis but a glimpse of summer skies,
A passing dream of summer days,
Glimmering o'er our mortal eyes
In twilight glooms and broken rays.

Until the perfect summer breaks
Upon the pure soul's happiness,
When the dream shifts and man awakes,
To ever-during calm and bliss.

AN AUTUMN IDYL.

Like hosts of faded joys, the withered leaves
Are whirled aloft by the remorseless winds ;
And, like the fruitless plans of youth, they lie
Trampled beneath the iron heel of time ;
And yet a brightness tints their palsied forms,
That vivifies the cold, pale face of death.
And the wild rain that beats upon the earth
Has lost its wonted music ; for the breath
Of coming winter, stealing through its tones,
Has rent asunder all its harmony,—
When lo ! the sights and sounds of Autumn die,
And, like the silver breaking in a storm,
There springs a light within my inner soul,
A gentle presence flitting thro' its chambers ;
Her eyes—like deepest wells revealing stars—
Are darkly eloquent with lustrous thoughts,
That spring from the deep fountains of her soul ;

I gaze upon them, and the troublous clouds
That bridge the horizon seem to fade away.
And the drear winds, enamored of her voice,
Are lulled to silence ; and the morn's pale light,
Cold as the heartless smile of frigid Scorn,
Is still a Summer sunlight when she comes ;
Her looks have meanings holier than the stars,
Upon the arid heart alight her words,
Soft as vernal air in dreary March.
In vain the clamorous winds pursue their course,
And chase the crumpled leaflets everywhere,
As purposeless as youth pursues its dreams :
In vain the rugged trees uplift their arms—
Bare as the stricken heart bereft of hope—
And seem to look to Heaven for light and strength
To brave the snows and blasts and chills of winter ;
In vain mists steal abroad, and shadows lurk
Upon the barren hills and naked fields.
I look upon this type of womanhood,
This human soul shrined in a gentle guise,
And nature's changes seem a passing dream,
And death a spectral phantom of the brain,
And all the sadness of the Autumn days
The feeling of a morbid fantasy.

FALL.

I hear the sobbing rain,
As if the Heavens weep at Autumn's breath ;
I see the leaves of Summer fall again,
Their beauty changed in death.

The idle wind is still,
A spectral vapor haunts the barren earth ;
Upon our teeming joys, there comes a chill—
The chill of Winter's dearth.

What if the tinted woods,
With outward loveliness, are gay and fair,
As if around them blushing Summer broods,
Yearning to linger there ?

What if their beauteousness
At Death's cold touch is strangely glorified ?

Their leaves will crumble soon to nothingness,
Or else be swept aside.

Their change is type of all ;
The hectic loveliness that forebodes decay,
Steeped with a dying glow, before they fall
To mingle with the clay.

All that we love and prize,
Changeth like leaves upon our toilsome way ;
Man's hoarded wealth but dust before his eyes,
Passing, like Life, away.

O leaves and blossoms, fall !
An after-life shall rise from out the gloom ;
The Autumn mists are but the outward pall
That hides perennial bloom.

O children of decay !
Swept by the blast and trodden by the rain,
Thy scattered dust shall eloquently say
That naught will fall in vain.

INDIAN SUMMER.

With dying splendor on her face,
Her robes of beauty laid aside,
The hectic Summer sighs to glide,
From the flushed earth, to yield a place :

To the dry foliage, sere and gold,
And trees whose rugged arms are bare,
And the shrill moanings of the air,
And the dim glories of the wold.

Unnatural silence, like a pall,
Inwraps the world, and the sun streams
In mellow waves of glinting gleams,
A saintly splendor over all.

Hush't is the wind,—disconsolate
That summer glories all should die,

While the calm azure of the sky
Looks down in throned, regal state.

And grand old maples upward gaze,
Like sentinels upon the road,
As if they mused of Nature's God,
Who crowns them with a myriad rays.

No summer sun shall pour his beams,
Like those that flood my path to-day,
Pallid and beautiful each ray,
Like shapings of our sweetest dreams.

O youthful prime ! O golden hours !
Ephemeral glories that have flown ;
O future yearnings mellowed down,
Yet tinted with the hues of flowers !

O tempered sunlight ! happy calms,
When nature sleeps, or wakes to see
The hours gliding silently,
O'er-loaded with a myriad balms.

Around our hearts the sunshine waves,
A calmed splendor, like the morn,
While Summer airs anew are born,
To sigh amid the florets' graves.

O golden moments touch't with balm !
Temper Fate's hostile storms abroad,
Instill a tranquil hope in God,
And in our lives infuse your calm.



FALLING LEAVES.

Gleam, Autumn sun, with mellow light !

Blow, Autumn winds, throughout the day !
For everywhere are death and blight
Where'er I tread my way.

O ! gather all the falling leaves,
And spare them, for they soon must die ;
While solemn nature mourns, and weaves
Their funeral lullaby.

The stricken leaves are but a part
Of all the death and misery,—
The helpless soul—the hopeless heart,
That everywhere I see.

The Autumn flickers e're it dies,
Like a pale light that waxeth dim ;

And nature, with her myriad sighs,
Pours forth a plaintive hymn.

Better to die in the golden dress,
Bathed in the noonday's cheering light,
Than live in utter loneliness,
And die in gloom and night.

O leaves ! we loved you when the song
Of birds waked music, as ye clave,
And murmured minstrelsy among
The branches stout and brave.

Or when the twilight flung around,
Like dreams of softer meaning then,
A tender gleam upon the ground,
A haze throughout the glen.

But now we miss you, for ye were
Our music on a Summer's day ;
No sound steals through this Autumn air,
Like your sweet roundelay.

Beautiful as ye lie in death,
Th' Almighty's hand has sent ye forth,
The sport of every wanton breath,
To strew the paths of earth.

My idle fancies shall have flown,
Wild as the leaves along the road,
While every gust of wind wafts down
To me pure thoughts of God.



SHORT DAYS.

Over the pale crust of the ermine snow
The wind is roaming, chilled with Winter's breath,
And the dim, waning days seem touched with woe,
For Autumn's lingering death.

They gather varied hours in their train,
And lay them in the stillness of the past,
And o'er the fitful visions of the brain
Their broken shadows cast.

The evenings lengthen as the days subside,
Deepening and broadening to the peaceful night,
Like tender shadows, tempering as they hide
The noon-day's garish light.

And dull with scowling clouds and fretful skies,
The little days pass onward to their bourne—

Life's shadowy landmarks, to our saddened eyes,
But vanished haze of morn.

The hours shrivel, as we vainly try
To grasp their fruits within our feeble hold ;
Their glow and gloom and beauty seem to die
In Winter's piercing cold.

O lessening days that silently depart !
Leave us the broader faith and larger hope;
So that the scarred and patient human heart
May love with fuller scope.

Yield us the deeper trust in human truth,
Show us the purer sky above the haze ;
So that the nobler visions of our youth
May light our devious ways.

Banish the frost of doubt that numbs the heart,
Broaden the narrowing limits of life's road;
So may your fleeting presence still impart
A lasting love for God.

BY THE FIRELIGHT.

Cradled within the arms of night,
Th' unquiet day is lulled asleep ;
The weary hours have taken flight,
Leaving their shadows long and deep,
That spread upon the earth below
Soft as the falling snow.

Betwixt the glimmer and the gloom,
The twilight beameth tenderly
In dim rays o'er the dusky room,
Like hope of immortality
That o'er the earth-bound spirit falls,
And shineth through life's prison walls.

Our converse is of earthly things ;
Our little world of joys is pure,
And silvery laughter peals and rings

Like flute-sounds in an overture,
Swelling with sudden rise aloft,
Or toning to a cadence soft.

The firelight dances on the walls
In wavering streams of ruby light ;
A human ray that gladly falls,
Cheering the mellow hours of night ;
While hurrying Time does seem
To linger by the lambent gleam.

No shadow in our dear retreat,
Nor heart glooms, like the night mists rise ;
Love speaketh from the laughter sweet,
Love danceth in the sparkling eyes ;
While in the radiance on the wall,
God's love divine seems over all.

The wrathful storm tramps wildly by
The desert waste of snows abroad ;
The keen winds rush with sullen cry,
Like shrieks of horror on the road:
Within the lustre of a light,
Like Israel's pillar-flame at night.

No mystic seer looks upward now,
In stars to read his destiny ;
We watch the flame's pure vestal glow
Shine, like a beacon, steadfastly,
And read our fireside cheering lore
Imaged in light upon the floor.



SNOW.

Fall, like peace, O gossamer snow !
While the searching winds are roaming abroad ;
Fall in your wealth, on this world below,
 Like a blessed balm from God.

Fall like kisses upon the earth,
That is cold and cheerless and full of woe,
And fill its heart with a sense of mirth,
 Silent and loving snow !

Fall in your wonderful purity,
Fair as a bride's unsullied dress ;
Fall from the heaven's immensity,
 On our Autumn dreariness.

Fall like a lover's phantasy,
That the heart of a maiden might yearn to know ;

Fall like a loving memory
On a soul o'erladen with woe.

Fall like the light of an infant's smile,
That sweetly beams for a mother alone ;
Fall like hope when it dawns awhile
On a doubting heart of stone.

Fall like tears that leave us resigned
When the soul submits to a hapless doom ;
Fall like light that falls on the blind,
On a life o'er-steeped in gloom.

Fall like the bounties God has given,
While the mournful winds are piping along ;
Fall like the hints we have of Heaven,
Like a blessed balm from God.

VOICES OF THE HEARTH.

“ True to the kindred points of Heaven and Home.”

WORDSWORTH.

BY THE HEARTH.



S Æneas, fires eternal,
To old Latium's shores brought home,
So may my thoughts of Home diurnal,
Chastened with the vestal fire,
Ever soaring upwards, higher,
Be as pure where'er they roam.

With the sacred hearth before me,
Kneeling down before its shrine,
And the fear of Heaven o'er me,
I have striven to learn the teachings,
All the wondrous reverent preachings
Of the love of home divine.

And this strong love, lying hidden
In its fullness on my heart,
In my lonely hours, unbidden,

Oft' has taken outward draping,
Till each fervid, homely shaping
Of this idle verse forms part.

What if this untutored singing
Wake no echo thro' the earth ?
'Tis a human voice upspringing—
And the strains though faint and broken,
Still shall be a living token
That they have a purer birth.

Tho' the mists of care around me,
Shroud my thought and cloud my rhyme ;
Tho' complaints to earth have bound me,
Still these simple lays have given
Faith in man, and hope in Heaven,
Now, and in the future time.

So my thoughts are ever yearning
To the hearth, lit from above ;
And the while the flame is burning,
I have prayed that God, the giver,
Watchful, might extinguish never
All the sacred fires of love.

Not in fear, nor unattended,
Shall this idle verse go forth ;
For affection's tones have blended
With these voices all their power,
When, in many a blissful hour,
Home and love have given them birth.

Smiles have made the hearthstone brighter,
Words have filled with joy the air ;
Looks have made life's burden lighter
When around me gathered faces,
Beaming with the kindly traces
Of a ministering, watchful care.

And when deeper night has hastened,
Soft unfolding raven wings,
All the firelights seeming chastened,
Purged from dross, in ashes lying,
Purer, brighter flames were flying
In the soul's imaginings.

Through the tide of rolling hours,
Through dim vistas of the years,
Through life's mead of daisy flowers,

Still these voices sweet are ringing,
To my fancy ever singing
Joys that hush my complaints and fears.

Soaring visions far above me
Glimmering, like God's host of stars,
Phantom shapes that yearn to love me,
Till on earth I seem to grasp them,
And in love my soul doth clasp them
Through earth's narrow prison bars.

Though life's toil and fret have jarred them,
Dimmed these broken, wandering strains,
And earth's dust and drought have marred
them,
And they fade and die in ashes ;
Still the hearth-fire ever flashes,
And the love of Home remains.

WEAVING.

A maiden was weaving at noon-day,
A maiden with gold-rippling hair,
Whose heart was as warm as the sun-rays
That softly encircled her there ;
And her eyes were like starlight in shadow,
And her thoughts were like sweet summer air.

I knew by the light of her smiling,
She was weaving a tissue of dreams,
A web of a million fancies
Illuming her life with their gleams ;
That she saw the far future before her
O'er-tinted with halcyon beams.

I did not disturb her with questions,
Nor mar those sweet thoughts with my own ;
For the sunlight that played with her fancies

From heavenly pathways had flown,
And she wound them in hues of the rainbow,
As she sat in the noon-day alone.

And soon when the shadows had fallen,
An old man, with gray-silvered hair,
Was weaving a tissue of visions
In the gloaming that fell on him there ;
And his thoughts were like hues in the evening,
In the chamber so ghostly and bare.

I knew by the lines on his temples,
And by the wan smiles on his face,
That from the dead past he was calling
A host of regrets from their place ;
And so he kept weaving his sorrows,
In a dream that was mournful to trace.

And thus we are weaving forever
Our hopes, our regrets and our fears,
And time soon dispels every vision,
Or we summon them back with our tears ;
And still we are none of us wiser,
As we glide through life's current of years.

TWILIGHT.

I asked the hallowed twilight
What made its rays so sweet ;
“The pulses of the day,” it said,
“No longer wildly beat,
And the beauty of my smile has grown
From noon-day’s glare and heat.”

I asked a gray-pale mortal,
What sanctified his life ;
“Its passionate dawn,” he answered,
With tumult has been rife,
And so its twilight calm is born
From glare and feverish strife.”

WORK.

Arise from your dreamy slumber,
And with stalwart heart go forth,
And be one of the number,
Brave workers here on earth.
Tho' the world is wide,
There is room beside,
For those who are staunch and true ;
So be at your post.
'Mid the busy host,
For there's work for you to do.

It is no time to be dreaming,
When the workers abroad are gone,
So throw off your sloth and seeming,
And with vigorous arms ply on ;
For the sun is high,
And there comes a cry,
That the laborers still are few ;

So make the most
Of the time, and boast
That there's work for you to do.

There are forests to clear before you,
There are fields to plow and sow,
And the sunlight is streaming o'er you,
That your labors may thrive and grow ;
So murmur a song
While your voice is strong,
And your heart is ready and true ;
And thank God
On the fruitful sod,
That there's work for you to do.

Let the miser boast of his hoard of gold,
Let riches and care keep pace ;
In the works of your hand there is worth untold
And joy in the toilsome race.
There is vigorous health
In your life's true wealth
Not prized by an indolent few ;
So in grief or glee,
Let your watchword be,
That there's work for you to do.

OLD LETTERS.

Don't burn them—they preach love and wisdom,
Of life's purest joys they are a part ;
I read loving mem'ries within them,
Deeply traced on the scroll of the heart.
Don't burn them—the past fades too swiftly,
O ! let these dim treasures remain ;
Faint records of life's fleeting moments
That the heart yearns to scan over again.

* * * Well, it don't matter,
Some hearts, 'tis ordained, are to bleed,—
Such letters I'll fold uncomplaining,
And lock them away from the sight,
The bitterness folded forever,
Regrets locked in stillness and night.

These lines, touched with Time's shrivel'd fingers
Are yellow and dim, like dead leaves ;

Yet the light of remembrance glows o'er them,
Like rays that make golden the sheaves.
The letters, though blurred, are not faded,
But speak like an old tender strain,
That flashes at once, when its music
We strive to recall, but in vain.

Don't burn them—they preach mystic wisdom
That sermons of lore cannot teach,
And from the vague twilight of memory,
Deep lessons of comfort they preach.
They cling to hard rocks of existence,
Like mosses deep-rooted fore'er,
Made green with the years that pass o'er them,
Though sorrow and ruin be there.

These letters are links that bind closer
The heart to the dead, buried years ;
Why scatter in dust and in ashes
The relics that memory endears ?
Our hopes may not ripen like blossoms,
Regrets prove that past joys are vain,
But there's truth in these dumb, aged treasures
That the heart loves to scan over again.

SUNLIGHT.

A sunbeam, once, in jovial mood,
Half loitered on its way,
And roamed among earth's pleasant nooks,
But knew not where to stay ;
It kissed the blushing, grateful flowers,
And lit my dear love's face
With sweetest smiles, then sped along,
And danced from place to place.

It stole within a lowly cot,
And shone upon Despair,
Where'er a shadow blurred the way
It seemed to linger there ;
It blessed the face of Poverty,
And sanctified its blight ;
And on the wall, some urchins strove
To grasp it with delight.

It nerved despondent age to step
Again, in youthful pride ;
Where'er the hopeful spirit dwelt,
It seemed to flit and glide.
It made the mountain path less steep,
And smoothed the rocks hard by ;
It stilled a mother's frenzied grief,
And hushed a lover's sigh.

When, lo ! I overtook the gleam,
This child of Hope and Youth,
The heaven-born angel sent to guard
The starry gates of Truth.
But as I strove to fix my grasp
Upon its presence there,
The transient ray, impalpable,
Had melted into air.

And yet the pure and aerial beam
Flitting, like time, away,
Doth live upon this solid globe,
To be man's guide and stay ;
So let us strive to firmly grasp,
And keep it near our heart,
So that if we are reft of all,
The sunbeam won't depart.

SHADOW.

His voice was hoarse and loud ;
And in earnest tones he beckoned and bade me turn
and see
A dark and ominous shadow, that was gathering over
me.

I looked and saw a crowd
Of busy, noisy workers, who, with hand and heart
and brain,
Were dreaming not of shadows, but of schemes, and
toil and gain ;
So I said his words were vain,
'Twas a fancy of his brain.

He bade me look once more :
Then, all the throng had vanished, and the star-girt,
saintly night
Was spreading, o'er the skies of God, vast tracks of
endless light ;

The heavens were tasseled o'er
With solemn gleams of splendor ; so I raised my eyes
above,
And said, "There were no shadows in the glory of
God's love ;"
So I told him then again
'Twas a fancy of his brain.

He bade me glance again :
As glowing morning was peeping through the folds of
dusky night,
I said—my visions teeming with a gush of new-born
light—
" You surely speak in vain ;
Upon the paths of morning, walk the angels Love and
Truth,
And God bestows no shadow o'er the thrilling hours
of youth ;
So your words are vain,
'Tis a fancy of your brain."

When lo ! I gazed on him,
And wonder rooted me to the earth ; for on the cold,
stark ground,

Nigh where he stood, a stealthy, boding shadow crept
around—

His world was dark and dim.

I said, “Behold the shadow of your thought which
hovers near!

Through this, all things are shadowed in your mourn-
ful atmosphere ;

So I’ve proved your words are vain,
’Tis a fancy of your brain.”

Look up, desponding one !

And muse not of life’s evils, nor of heart-consuming
care,

For these will bring a shadow, that will haunt thee
everywhere ;

But deem all things are done

For everlasting good on earth, through God’s far-
reaching sight,

And then, from off thy heart,
The shadow will depart.

STARLIGHT.

O myriad hosts of stars ! innumerable
As heavenly mercies on a sin-stained earth ;
Unchanging as the God who gave ye birth.
Your flashing splendors, indescribable
As the minutest wonder of His might,
Or snow-flakes circling in the stormy air ;
Vast as the Infinite One who set ye where
Your radiance is illimitable—
Ye are the jewels of eternity !
Our visions cannot penetrate your rays,
For all your dazzling glories dim our sight ;
In child-like wonder we can only gaze—
In reverence cast our narrow glance on ye,
And feel our littleness, and God's immensity.

O clustered glories in the depths of Heaven—
Eternal beacons in a measureless way !

The glittering gems upon the brow of even,
Crowning the night with peace and sanctity.
Your everlasting light is but a ray
That emanates from God who sent ye forth
Upon your fixed, illimitable path.
The mystery of your far-off ceaseless light,
Perchance has been revealed to angel's sight,
Who praise ye in a loud exultant strain.
Your great effulgence man doth dimly see ;
And, yet, ye do not shine on him in vain,
If in your endless glow he spells eternity,
And reads his being's immortality.



UNDER THE TREES.

Hither, O faded mortal,
Restless and ill at ease,
Come where the voice of Nature
Whispers love and peace !

Where streaks of golden sunlight
Illumine a shade of leaves,
Like flashes of hope in the eyes
Of one who pains and grieves.

Haste in the wealth of shadow
Made by the drooping trees,
And your parched heart shall drink a joy
In the sweets of each passing breeze.

Look how the flecks of white-winged cloud
Flit and float and part,

Pure as a changing dream
In a young child's sinless heart !

The insects whir in their innocent sport,
The birds exult on the wing,
It seems a world of joy and love
For every sentient thing.

I hear a flutter in the air,
A throb of bliss around,
In every stir the leaflets make,
In every buzzing sound.

And like an answering echo,
A low voice creeps along,
A cadence and a symphony
In the jovial brooklet's song.

Haste, O wild bird, on the wing,
And chant a hymn to God !
To charm the idle dreams of men
Upon the summer sod.

UNDER THE MAPLE TREE.

Under the maple tree,
With tuneful voice of glee,
The choristers near, without tremulous fear,
May echo our heart-stirring song,
That syllables praise, thro' the long summer days.
When thy leaf-crested branches strong,
Are waving aloft
To the music soft,
That we sing to the maple tree,
To the beautiful maple tree.

Under the maple tree,
That veils thy eyes from me,—
O would that their luster might fall and alight
On the heart now beating for thee !
The shadowy gloom may betoken my doom,
And the rustling sound, mocking glee ;
A jest or a scoff,

A coquettish laugh,
That I hear 'neath the maple tree,
'Neath the beautiful maple tree.

Under the maple tree,
That spreads its arms for me,
I sit in the shade of a calm, mossy glade,
And, longing for rest, lay me down ;
Or wandering muse, in the cool evening dews,
Of the buzz of the babbling town—
The strife and the din,
That steals not within
The folds of this dear maple tree,
Of this beautiful maple tree.

Under the maple tree,
With joyful hearts and free,
We'll boast in our pride, of our land, far and wide,
In glorious thanksgiving song ;
For our hearts are as true as the heavenly blue,
As our hope and our arms are strong ;
So let old and young,
With prayer on each tongue,
Praise their God for the maple tree,
For the beautiful maple tree.

CHILDHOOD,

We love it and we know not why,
 This image mirrored in the heart ;
The gleesome smile—the love-lit eye—
The songful tones of infancy,
And all that eyes can never see
 And words can ne'er impart.

We clasp within our arms a form
 Fashioned as perfect as a flower ;
Deeming that the Almighty's arm
Shields its young life from every harm,
Praying that truth may be its charm,
 And love its only dower.

We gaze within the azure eyes,
 And deem the soul dwells slumbering there ;
We hear the prattling words that rise,

Pure as the balm of early spring
Wondering if 'mid her blossoming
There grows a bud so fair.

Tender and true it sports awhile,
Chasing the butterflies in their flight ;
Basking in nature's loving smile,
Gamboling where the brooklets go,
Until it warms their limpid flow
Like noonday's glowing light.

For life tho' drenched with sorrowing tears,
Still brightens at our darlings' call ;
Hopes and visions and clouds and fears
Mellow, like sunset in the even,
When childhood, pure as any heaven,
Softens the shadows all.

We need not mourn the long lost days,
When childhood lisps upon our knee ;
Its winsome love time's lap repays,
And twining the dimpled arms with ours,
Our life is a joy of golden hours
Attuned with childhood's glee.

MY DARLINGS.

Gather round me, happy children,
Let me share your sports awhile,
While the festive Summer gladdens
All your radiance with her smile ;
Haste, my darlings, let the sunlight
Of your natures warm my heart,
And the sad thoughts crowding round me
Will on noiseless wing depart.

Live within the narrow circles
Of my visions wan and dim,
And your looks will give a meaning
To this fervent, artless hymn ;
Hasten—for the sombre shadows
Even now have sped away ;
For the prattle of my darlings
Makes my life a holiday.

What deep meaning in your lisplings—
What wisdom in your each replies ;
E'en the florets smile in wonder,
Pleasure in their gentle eyes ;
While the air around you, darlings,
Over-loaded with your love,
Wafts a tenderer glow to nature,
Purer tints of Heaven above.

God has placed you all, my darlings,
On this sin-pressed earth to-day,
That your pure and sweet out-pourings
Might be music on our way ;
For ye are the links that binds us
To the Heaven we cannot see,
Till we find it mirrored, darlings,
In your soul's sweet purity.

Blight may come upon the harvest,
Taint may steal amid the air,
But a light of angel brightness
Gleameth where my darlings are ;
Love me ; and the world is better,
Brighter, purer than it seems,

Glowing as the Land of Promise,
Haunting Israel's fitful dreams.

May God's blessings on my darlings,
Fall where'er their footsteps press,
Till the summer air rejoiceth
With their glee and gladsomeness.
Till the waning skies of even
And morn's tenderer loveliness,
Shall be hallowed in revealings
Of my darlings' happiness.



THANKSGIVING.

O, let us, while the Almighty showers
His full rich store of gifts on earth,
While plenteous blessings all are ours,
A choral hymn of praise pour forth.

A wide, diffusing harmony,
The music of our heartfelt prayers
That softly may ascend to Thee,
God of our joys, and griefs and cares.

We glean the harvest we have sown,
A golden and abundant store ;
Hopes long since planted Thou didst crown
With joy—we never sought for more.

Grateful, we each may lowly bow,
While all the sweetness of the year

Seems mellowing in the sunlight glow,
That softly gushes far and near.

We have not delved nor toiled in vain,
For labor's golden fruits are ours ;
And God has blessed the summer rain,
And sanctified the summer hours.

For every ray that kissed the earth,
Divinely passed amid the corn,
And every bird that carolled forth,
Sang of the joys that would be born.

Glad sounds shall mingle with the air
Of Autumn, while the changeful hours
Shall waft abroad each fervent prayer,
Pure as the breath of summer flowers.

And all the hopeful-hearted throng,
And weary-laden hearts who grieve,
As if inspired with heavenly song,
A joyful hymn of thanks shall weave.

LEGENDARY POETRY.

THE CHILD OF THE LAKE.

A Legend of St. Hilaire, Que.



HE rich and fragrant summer day,
Lingering as it passed away,
Flooded with myriad dyes
A glory over the skies.

And from its death the sunset rose,
That beautified the earth's repose,
And wrapt with tender grace
Dumb Nature's speaking face.

The shaggy hills their summits bent,
And seemed to touch the firmament ;
Solemn and dark they stood
As o'er man's fate to brood.

And rosy clouds in seeming sleep,
Floated afar in Heaven's deep,
The day's last sweetest bloom,
Fading away in gloom.

And from the breathless hush around,
There issued forth a tremulous sound ;
Which, quivering thro' the air
Made dulcet music there.

Lapping the pebbles o'er and o'er,
A lake's soft wavelets kissed the shore,
Or, in the twilight ray,
In dimples sped away.

A beauty dwelt upon its face,
A dreamy hush, an angel grace ;
And like a child's pure prayer,
Its lisplings filled the air.

And o'er its sparkling, limpid tide,
The spirit of love did seem to glide,
The sinless love that lies
In childhood's guileless eyes.

And mountains proud with hoariness,
Girdled its placid loveliness,
And seemed to guard its calm
From every earthly harm.

For once—so ran the curious tale—
There dwelt and roved within its pale,
A being of love and light—
A gentle water-sprite.

Whose gossamer wings would sweep the spray,
And meet the sunbeams in their play,
Until her path did seem
A track of golden gleam.

Or else, the incense of the morn,
Tossed on her yellow locks, was born
To mingle o'er her path,
With wanton winds of earth.

And oft' when shadows dimly crept,
Couched in a lily's leaves she slept,
Hiding in many a fold
Her gossamer wings of gold.

And with their music weirdly soft,
The ripples wooed her oft' and oft',
Till faint with song, one day
She wandered from their play—

And rambled to a moss-clad bower ;
Then, poising on a wilding flower,
In slumber, near its side,
The water sprite espied,—

A fair and sinless human child,
By light and fragrance there beguiled,
Lulled by the warm wind's kiss
To a sweet, dreamful bliss.

And as her pure breath came and went,
Upon the sleeping innocent,
The sprite, in strange surprise,
Fixed its astounding eyes—

And marveled at the brow so white,
Like purest lilies seen at night,
And at the dimpled face
Imbued with winsome grace:

Till wonder changed to love and awe ;
For never in those haunts before
Had fay been so beguiled
By any human child.

For every tinted, marvelous flower
Seemed to have centred its sweet power,
The marvel of its dress
Upon her beauteousness.

The peaceful clouds that lightly skim
In quiet joy the heaven's rim,
Seemed to have touched her face
With all their calm and grace.

And as she slept, a blissful dream,
Reflecting sweetness in a gleam,
Cast a pure sunny smile
Upon her lips awhile ;

Until the beauty of the sprite
Blent with the vision of delight,
And woke the child, who gazed
In bashful awe amazed.

And then a brightness wrapt her face,
Dowered with childhood's chastened grace,
As from the awakened child
The soul dawned forth, and smiled :—

As only children's souls can smile,
Free from all sin, and taint and guile ;
The smile which angels love
To glance at from above !

But the wild naiad, ever gay,
Saddened at what she could not say,
With mingled joy and pain
Glanced at the child again.

Like shadows o'er the summer grass,
She knew that all that blooms must pass,
And fade and change in death,
Fleeter than Summer's breath.

That heaven-born suns, and earth-born flowers,
Have all their appointed times and hours,
That in wide nature's range
Is never ending change.

But naught in nature ever smiled
Like the poor visage of the child,
For tints of sky and flower
Seemed to have been her dower.

And when the naiad sped the glade,
The pure child's lisping carol made
A sweeter harmony
Than the lake's melody.

And oft' the fay, in dreamy mood,
Wandering from the lake and wood,
In a deep, slumberous dell,
Felt the sweet mortal's spell.

The joyless flowers felt and knew
Wherefore and whence her footsteps flew ;
And in drowse of pain,
Her absence mourned in vain.

For all her care and love were spent
Upon the winsome innocent—
A silent love not shown,
And to the child unknown.

Like the warm influence of the Spring,
Which thrills to life each sentient thing,
 So beamed the love and light
 Of the glad water-sprite.

Until one peaceful Summer's eve,
When listless winds faint carols weave,
 Along the lakelet's side,
 Ruffling its placid tide :

A sudden void imbued the air,
And wilding flowers scattered there,
 As if with pain or woe,
 Their stricken heads bent low.

And the gay sprite felt ill at ease,
As winds rushed vaguely thro' the trees,
 As if they searched the place
 To kiss a childish face.

And when the dull, despairing hours
Left their blank impress on the flowers,
 And o'er the gloaming light
 Trode the dark, lowering night—

A dim foreboding, fixed, intense,
A lurid void, and aching sense,
 Transfixed a baneful blight
 Upon the water-sprite.

Until the fearful truth was known,
That pitiless, ruthless change had flown,
 That Death had hovered forth,
 To snatch the child from earth.

And then the naiad softly grieved,
And lowly in her sorrow, weaved
 A ceaseless, doleful song,
 Where'er she sped along.

Knowing that life from death doth spring
In nature—that each sentient thing
 Breathes its little day—
 Doth blossom and decay—

That naught on earth doth die in vain,
That flowers fade to bloom again,
 That nature's joys appear
 With each returning year.

The naiad mourned the darling child,
Whose beauty had her hours beguiled,
Whose happy life did seem
A lovely, transient dream.

The sobbing lakelet lashed the shore,
And said, "the child will come no more ;"
And the wild streamlet's roar
Echoed forevermore.

And sadder shadows through the dell,
Upon the naiad softly fell,
Until a mazy sleep
Upon her eyes did creep.

And as she dozed, a dreamful lull,
Chastened and soft and beautiful,
In the pure twilight's smile,
Hovered around awhile.

And o'er the silence of the place,
A lovelier aspect she could trace,
And the pure lakelet's tide,
Seemed strangely glorified.

Lit with a new and wonderous charm,
With solemn, peaceful, infinite calm,
Nor guessed the sleeping sprite
Whence rose the Heavenly light.

And o'er the quiet sanctity,
Clad in spiritual purity,
An angel form of light
Dazzled the sleeping sprite.

And lo ! the soul on earth concealed
In God's pure angel stood revealed ;
And the bright, seraph child
Again looked forth and smiled.

Freed from the fetters of decay,
Her presence glimmered as a ray
Of immortality
And Heaven's purity.

And then the vision passed away,
And calmer rose the Summer's day,
Serenity and more clear,
Upon the lakelet near.

And still upon the wavelet's face,
There seems to dwell an angel grace,
And like a child's pure prayer,
Its lispings murmur there.

And o'er the beauty of its tide,
The spirit of love still seems to glide ;
The Heavenly love that lies
In childhood's angel guise.



THE TRAVELER AND THE TREE.

From the Talmud.

A lonely man once dwelt on earth,
Who never seemed to know
The daily purpose of his life,
On this fair earth below ;
His cravings had no clear intent,
He never owned a friend,
And all his veering, dreamy thoughts
Had neither aim nor end.

In changeful mood, as was his wont,
One day he roamed afar,
Without a guide to point his steps,
Without a beacon star—
When lo ! at noon-day's hour he spied
A tall and stately tree,

With leaf-fringed boughs, that towered high
To Heaven in majesty.

The perfumed breeze that fanned and lulled
Its myriad leaves asleep,
Breathed sweetly o'er his moody soul
A slumber calm and deep.
Upon the dainty grass beneath
He closed his weary eyes,
And the pure air did waft him dreams
Of Summer sweets and skies.

He woke refreshed, and recognized
The music of his dream,
In Nature's jubilant melody
That issued from a stream ;
He slaked his thirst and blessed the place,
Nor felt he then forlorn,
For his lone heart rebounded high
With gratitude new-born.

Then, calling on the tree, he said :
“ What blessing more can Heaven

Lavish upon a regal tree,
To whom all joys are given ?
Thy blissful life from grief and care
And doubt is surely free ;
The dower of leaves which deck thy form
Is God's fair tracery.

“ For thee, a gushing, murmurous rill
Is singing low and sweet,
And birds are nestling in thy boughs
And warbling at thy feet ;
Thou shelterest many a nest of young
Among thy twigs of green,
While Heaven 'mid thy clustering leaves
Pours down a glorious sheen.

“ Beneath thy shade the weary sit,
To rest upon their way,
While the soft chorus of the leaves
Wafts fretful care away ;
The Summer hoards its joys for thee,
No Winter makes thee cold ;
Thy sturdy nature broods the storm,
Defiant, brave and bold !

“And every joy that God can bring,
Is strewn on thee from Heaven,
And all to glad thy peaceful lot,
His bounteous hand hath given.
One bliss can only yet be thine,
O richly dowered tree !
Upon thy off-shoots may He cast
The blessings showered on thee.”



THE LOVER STAR,

OR THE ORIGIN OF THE MARSH METEOR.

An Indian Legend.

Once upon a time, among the infinite stars—
Divine Intelligences massed in Heaven—
There grew a fearful contest, like our wars,
Until a conquered world to earth was driven,
And then pursuing an erratic flight,
Glimmered above the red men's homes at night.

But to their eyes it seemed a spectral gleam,
And pierced each savage heart with wild affright,
The children ran in horror from the beam,
Deeming its lustre was a baneful light ;
And so, this star, hurled from its sphere above,
Could meet no answering ray of human love.

Until it wandered o'er the head of one,
A dusky maiden of the Chippewas,

A wildflower blooming in the wilds alone,
Whose glance was purer than ethereal stars ;
Who, like the flowers, in a world of strife,
From the pure air of heaven inhaled her life.

The swarthy warriors felt her looks of love
Which quelled the ruder passions of each breast,
Where'er her lightsome presence came to rove,
With purer aims each redman was possessed,
Until the very air was sanctified,
When in their midst her airy steps would glide.

And so the star-world, jealous of the power
Of one who seemed a spirit of the air,
Circled the beauty of the Indian flower
With its perfected glory everywhere ;
Where'er she dwelled, or tripped, the star-beam
shone,
And crowned her presence like a splendid zone.

And when the worlds of Night reflected far
The solemn glory of the Infinite,
The soft refulgence of this wondrous star,

Paler and purer than another light,
Would gird the maiden's temples, when in prayer,
She called on Manitou to guard her there.

And when in tongues of flame the camp-fires leapt,
And all the lurid air was dim and still,
And the dear winsome maid unconscious slept,
Its lovely light would fill her slumbers, till
It cast a radiant smile upon her face,
Or, with refulgence, glorified the place !

And every warrior heard, that when her sire
Hunted the deer amid the breathless woods,
He cast his barbed arrows truer, higher,
Than others tracking the dim solitudes ;
And so they deemed the star had proved a charm
To fire his strength, and nerve his stalwart arm. •

It happened on a feverish Summer's day,
For blackberries in the wood the maiden roved,
And in the tangled thicket lost her way ;
She wept and shrieked for aid to him she loved,
But only made the booming bittern wake
An answering echo in the lonely brake.

Soon in her eyes a silent horror crept,
Within the dreary thicket, o'er the ground
And in her ears the wind's strange murmurs swept
Unearthly, hollow cadences around,
Until the murky midnight, like a pall,
With noisome vapors, settled over all.

In vain she called upon the star she loved,
And bent a pitiful look towards the sky ;
Among the poisonous slime and weeds she roved,
With none to pity her, or see her die ;
And the wild rain made hissing melody,
And dashed with tears each fern and shrub and
tree.

The horrid darkness hid the longing star,
That vainly sought to guide her devious way,
And where the morning tipped the heavens afar,
It seemed the pallid spirit of the day,
For the sweet maiden's loveliness would ne'er
Endow it with her charm to make it fair.

And still the troublous star pursues its flight,
Its beams less radiant, dimmer than before,

Seeking in vain responsive human light,
The Indian maiden whom it loved of yore ;
And lingers near the world, until it seems
An earth-born memory of ethereal gleams.

And often to the wanderer it will show
A wavy and deceptive glimmering spark,
Forever deeming that its heavenly glow
Will find an answer in this void of dark ;
And so it roams, until it guides astray
Travelers who would seek its treacherous way.

For when it nears the the vaporous, stagnant earth,
Its heaven-born glory fades away in space,
And all the worldly mists that throng its path,
Infects its journeyings from place to place ;
And thus, its fitful and enfeebled light
Is just the mocking of a star of night !

THE FISHERMAN'S WATCH.

The wild sea frets, and fumes, and foams
 Along the dreary shore,
Beating the callous granite ledge
 With restless, fitful roar ;
The air is filled with scudding spray
 And the ocean's mournful song,
And a fisherman sings a careless tune
 As he slowly steps along.

His hair is white as the crested foam,
 His eyes, like the waves, are blue ;
His face is seamed with the storms of life,
 But his heart is blithe and true.
He worships God in his honest way,
 And loves the boisterous sea
And his two bold sons, whose sturdy hearts,
 Like the tides, are bold and free.

In their lightsome skiff they brave the storm,
 Beneath the wrathful skies,
Or ride the blue, deceitful calm
 Before the storm-clouds rise ;
Or gaily stem the dimpled tide
 Of the treacherous, smiling sea,
Till the flapping waves seem to laugh aloud
 And echo the young men's glee.

Those sturdy son's are the fisher's pride,
 Their love, his staff in life,
Rich with a sailor's wondrous lore
 Of sea-born danger and strife ;
And often around the cheery hearth,
 He spins, in the hush of night,
The tale, recounted a thousand times,
 With a new and strange delight.

And when the sunset fuses the sea
 With magic-tinted rays,
And the waves grow sad in the evening light,
 That melts in the shadowy haze,
The old man sits on the butted crag
 And watches the solemn sea,

For the dim approach of his sons' return
To hail their boat with glee.

And oft' he marked the changeful waves
Remorseless roll and roll,
Till they seemed an awful mystery
That troubled his weary soul :
But once he watched—till the darkness shot
The sea, like a terrible doom,
And his anxious eye peered forth in vain
Thro' the drenching mist and gloom.

Till the starlight dimmed his pitiful gaze,
And the morn broke sad and gray,
And the ominous sea bore no joyful boat
On her welcome homeward way ;
And with direful fear in his heart he crept
To his post on the cliff again,
But the 'wild'ring waves did not solve his doubts
As he waited and watched in vain.

And when the awful truth was known
That the skiff had foundered at sea,

With a vacant laugh, the fisherman said,
 “ They are coming back to me.”
And still, when the sundown dimmed the earth,
 He'd look from the callous steep
For his sons' return from the shadowy main,
 From the calm, deceitful deep.

And thro' long days, and weeks, and years
 That marked their course for him,
The old man sought the desolate crag,
 And watched till his eyes were dim ;
And saddened waves sang their mournful song
 To his heedless ears in vain,
That the merry boat with his stalwart sons
 Would never return again.

Till once—when the sea was lit with smiles
 And in tranquil spirit lay,
And the waves rejoiced in the summer calm,
 In the peaceful summer day—
A placid smile shown over his lips,
 As with rapturous voice he cried,
“ I see them now—they have come at last,”
 Then seeming to hail them—died.

And still the sea foams and frets,
And beats the rock-ribbed shore,
And sends to Heaven despairing cries,
Or moans with sullen roar ;
And when the dead mists clasp the earth,
'Tis said, in the gloom and the chill,
A vaporing figure peers from the cliff,
Who waits for his two sons still.



MISCELLANEOUS.

REGENERATION.

*(Vide the Proclamation of the President of the United States in the
Autumn of 1862.)*

“ Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth,
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind !
Be through my lips to unawakened earth
The triumph of a prophecy ! O wind,
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind ?”

SHELLEY.



GAIN the Autumn smites the earth,
And dims the Summer's light,
And drives the dying leaflets forth,
Wasted with damp and blight.

They fly like cursed thing of ill,
Stricken and tempest-tossed,
And in the ominous gloom and chill
Are trodden down and lost.

Like dim forebodings in the soul,
A vague mist steals abroad ;

And, like a muttered anguish, roll
The mournful winds of God.

The sunset skies, so wan and pale,
Seem touched with Winter's dearth,
That creeps within the shuddering gale,
Roaming the callous earth.

But sadder than drear Autumn's song,
A people's groans and cries
Sweep their dull echoings along,
Far-reaching to the skies.

They mourn in darkest doubt and night,
Great heroes in the dust,
And loyalty-stricken in the fight,
True to its flag and trust.

And whirling doubts that flit like leaves
In mazes through the brain,
Ask, if the land whose strong heart grieves,
Pours blood and tears in vain.

The direful blast, the deadly roar,
The battle's stormy din,
Come from the Nation's inward core,
Warring with Slavery's sin.

God works in dread, mysterious ways
The people's lasting good ;
And Freedom's light breaks through the haze
Above the fields of blood !

And o'er the battle's sulphurous cloud
Exulting hopes go forth,
The germs that peep above the shroud
Of the cold, blood-stained earth.

The free man's heart beats high and swells
With pulses of the Spring,
When Freedom in the New Year's bells
In jubilant tones shall ring.

Rave, icy winds ! ye cannot drown
A Nation's joyful strain,
When God shall hurl Oppression down,
And sunder Slavery's chain.

The Nation quails not ; for the strife
Shall stir her nobler blood ;
From death there springs forth happier life,
From partial evil, good.

Whene're she tramples Slavery's ill
As slime beneath her feet,
True Liberty shall nerve her will,
To make the state complete.



LIGHT OF CANADA'S SAGES.

Written after the Toronto Judges had decided to return Anderson, the Slave, who had sought the protection of Canada.

Light of Canada's sages,
Truth for the hoary wise,
Wisdom for doubting judges,
Who read with jaundiced eyes
An eternal law before them—
A statute that never can change,
That holds men free on this ample earth
Where'er they may chance to range.

Come from your dusty chambers,
Ye who interpret the laws,
Unloose the bonds that fetter the heart
To slavery's blood-stained cause ;
For a people's voice, like a tempest,
Shall drown your feeble speech,

The fiat uttered for freedom's sake
No judge can ever impeach.

The clank of the negro's fetters,
The snap of the brutal thong,
Shall waken the heart to justice
For slavery's curse and wrong.
A freeman claimed your protection ;
Will you send him back a slave ?
That a hellish crew may gloat o'er his corse
Consigned to a felon's grave !

Are we part of the pack of bloodhounds
To track with rifle and knife ?
To read in statutes a meaning
To yield up a brother's life ?
Our life and freedom united,
Are given by God to defend,
At every cost and hazard—
To guard and preserve to the end.

There are laws in every bosom
That can never change or die.
As wide as the dome of heaven,

As fixed as the stars on high ;
A sense of eternal justice,
A law of eternal right,
That shall send forth free the man that is
 wronged
By the dust, in the Sages' sight.



SONG.

O darling sister ! pray for me :
Thy whispered prayers I need,
Thy thoughts of angel purity
On angel tracks shall speed ;
And God thy childish voice may hear,
And from His heavenly throne
May scatter hope-like song to cheer
Sweet lisplings like thine own.

O darling sister ! pray for me :
Thy prayerful love ascends,
And like a seraph's harmony,
With earth's rude music blends ;
The gathering host of groveling cares,
By thy pure prayers to-day,
Have taken passage unawares
And fled in dreams away.

O darling sister ! pray for me :
God hearkens to each word,
And angel wings shall waft to thee
A melody unheard,—
A whisper of the Almighty's care,
A sweet response from Heaven,
An answering tone to every prayer,
Sincerely, purely given.



VIOLETS IN THE CITY.

Child of the vernal year,
Dear harbingers of radiance and of bloom,
Nestling amid the forest's leafy gloom
Whence sped ye here ?

A poet's holiest thought
Contains no meaning like your petals show ;
Soft azured with the azure's tenderest glow,
With purity unwrought.

Your stainless loveliness
Rebukes the uneasy and tumultuous throng,
Who heed not, as they wildly rush along,
The love your looks express.

I marvel at your life,
Shining where darkest mists enshroud the ways,

Where rapid pass the busy days
'Mid trade and jarring strife.

What charms you must possess
To bloom near courts, where crime, the child of woe,
Crouches and creeps, or wandering to and fro,
Might dim your loveliness.

Whence sped your subtle power?
To shine with such sky-dowered constancy,
Amid a crowd who lack the time to see
Perfection in a flower.

Type of that trust divine,
Of hope that waits—of faith that never dies—
Living alone amid a myriad eyes
That have no light for thine.

Like a strange memory
Of giddy raptures when the world was new,
When visions sparkled like the morning dew,
Your fragrance seems to me:

Or, like empurpled dreams
Of shadowy joys that haunt the idle brain,
That have no shape, and only flash to wane,
Your softened beauty seems.

The valleys cast ye forth ;
The mossy nooks where Heaven smiled to see
The blue-eyed token of her purity
Mirrored so near the earth :

And placed you near our sight,
Charming it to reverence—as we gaze
On loveliness amid unlovely ways,
To edge our thoughts with light.

A TRIBUTE.

“ On Monday, a Queen’s messenger brought from Osborne to Windsor three little wreaths and a bouquet. The wreaths were simple chaplets of moss and violets, wreathed by the three elder Princesses—the bouquet of violets, with a white camelia in the centre, was sent by the widowed Queen. Between the heraldic insignia these last tributes from the widow and orphan daughters were laid upon the coffin—mementos of domestic love and worth above all heraldry that ever was emblazoned.”—*London Times*.

Shine, O Heaven-eyed flowers !

To light the darksome gloom

From her—the fondest token

To deck a husband’s tomb ;

Pure and bright as Heaven,

Frail and sad as earth,

A sacred, loving tribute

To nobleness of worth.

Shine, pale, meek-eyed flowers !

In hues like azure skies,

And glad the blazoned coffin,
While England mourns and sighs—
A queen the wreath has woven,
In tears, in woe, in gloom,
And lasting love has twined them
To sanctify his tomb.

Shine, O Heaven-eyed flowers !
Above the pomp and show,
That mock with garish splendor,
Trappings of death and woe.
Emblem of bloom eternal,
Ye lie upon the sod,
From mortal woe and sorrow,
To raise our souls to God.

A HERO.

Captain Stoddart, who lost his life in saving lives on the wreck of the
Anglo Saxon.

The sea seems hungering for its prey,
The sky is stark and cold,
But duty shirks not danger's way,
And death can't fright the bold ;
The shivering planks are breaking fast,
The pitiless waves run high,
And fate his earthly doom has cast,
But heroes cannot die.

The helpless, tenderly he takes,
And yields his strength to save,
And every heart with tremor quakes,
But he alone is brave ;
The ocean's moan—the dead wave's strife
Called him to duty then ;

He only lived to shelter life,
A hero among men.

And woman's eyes with tears are dim,
And children sob and weep
Whenever memory speaks of him,
The martyr of the deep ;
God scatters little natures o'er
The wide, bleak face of earth,
And now and then, for evermore,
He sends a hero forth.

“ NOCTE FACENTIA LATE.” (Virgil.)

As when upon the face of one,
A dying, hectic flush doth bide,
The fervid radiance of the sun
Mantles the heavens far and wide.

It crowns the expanse with fading glows,
Dissolving into streaks of grey,
It tints the ambient air with rose,
And lights the landmarks of our way.

But as the dusky shadows fall,
To blur the sunset's rosy bloom,
Shading the splendor over all
With gathering dark and deepening gloom.

The shimmering luster silently
Falling, and fading into space

With solemn meaning, tenderly
Lighteth a wan and serious face—

Of one who sitteth in the shade,
Watching the rays and shadows die,
Until the black-browed night hath made
Its impress on the ashen sky.

Her life doth seem a little span
Of transient glooms and broken gleams,
For change has made its beauty wan,
And time has shadowed all her dreams.

The joys and sorrows of her days,
Like passing clouds have taken flight ;
The fretful cares that dimmed her ways,
Have melted into shades of night.

And yet she feels within the air
The flutter of some angel wings,
Touching her brooding thoughts of care
With pure and sweet imaginings.

And as the darklier shadows come,
To blot earth's transient loveliness,
And the dim boundary of her home
Flitteth in gloom and nothingness—

She feels the narrow present time
Is merging to eternity ;
And so her night is made sublime
With hope of immortality.



DRINK.

There's a sound of woe in the cheerless street
And a shriek in the midnight air.
For a drunken sot is reeling along
In the gathering darkness there ;
And I hear the meaningless words that come
From the depths of his heart's despair ;
 'Tis a moan for drink.
 For he'll drink and drink
Till earth seems to reel and swim—
Till his hope in God and his trust in man
Are lost in his pitiless cries—
Till he loathes his life, and so loathing, dies,
 And all for the sake of drink.

He cries not for aid from a merciful God,
He craves not a pittance of bread,
But shrieks for drink to the hollow winds

That echo his tottering tread ;
And his fleshless bones clasp the cold, dumb stones
That serve for his pillow and bed,
For he'll drink and drink
Till his eyes are dim—
Till his senses ache with pain—
For his trust in God and his faith in man
He'll never on earth regain,
While he hates the sight of both day and night
For the sake of the demon, drink.

Has he sipped the cup of a direful doom ?
Has care made him grovel low ?
Has penury cankered his youthful hopes,
Or darkened their rainbow glow ?
Has Heaven deserted this homeless man,
Whose words seem the gaspings of woe ?
'Tis the poison drink
That maddens the brain—
That makes his bosom a hell,
While the drunkard's gloom, like a fearful doom,
In his heart and home does dwell,
Where fell disease and famine have sped,—
And all for the sake of drink.

Raise him from where he crouches and creeps
On the slime and mud at his feet,—
Bear him where blessings shall scatter in night
The curses his lips would repeat ;
Raise him,—but banish the maddening cup,
The curse of the home and street,
And wage a war with the demon drink,
The tempter to crime below,
That makes a hell of the purest dell,
Where flowers might bloom and grow,—
That surely gives birth on this beautiful earth
To the direst sin and woe.



POOR.

Her childish face, tanned by the summer's sun,
With waves of chestnut hair,
In circlets wreathed around her brow—

 An artless, timid one,
 Her eyelids drooping low,
Came softly to me unaware.

Her eyes were liquid orbs of light,
Brimming with love-rays chastely bright ;
 They seemed to me
 As if enchanting melody,
Wafted thro' realms of space
 Had found a home apart
From callous air—where rudely toss't,
The harmony would surely have been lost,
And in their depths had found a resting-place,
For every look she gave was music to my heart.

To her the flowers might have bequeathed
Their garb of beauty in the morn,
When with the dew-drops wreathed
And felt the happier for their boon.
The roaming breeze that stirs the cloud above
In sultry noon,
O surely might have sighed disconsolate for her
love.

An air of poverty
Clung around this artless child ;
Her vestments, homely spun, were coarse and
plain :
She seemed to me
A mountain flow'ret wild,
Whom nature had made beautiful—a debt she
owed
To the dense forests round the child's domain—
A cot of maple wood.

Glide past me, sweet one, with thy airy tread !
A calm ethereal sense of happiness
Has fallen where thy steps have sped ;
The air is resonant with a sweet, sweet sound,

That, welling from thy guileless heart,
Reveals a tenderness,
And earnest thoughts of good abound
Within my breast,
That of my being are a part,
That breathe upon my turbid spirit—rest.



WHO CARES ?

We plod and dream and grieve and sing,
And sow and reap and gather tares,
We hoard what seems a priceless thing—
It turns out dross—and no one cares.

The busy, restless world moves on,
Each centered on his own affairs ;
Men seem to have a heart of stone
For those who fail—for no one cares.

We love—the idol soon grows cold,
The dearly prized, Time never spares ;
The skies are streaked with faded gold,
But no one heeds—and no one cares.

Our purest dreams have something base ;
Men's secret motives no one bares ;

With shams they seek preferment's place,
But no one heeds—and no one cares.

And every joy regret doth pale ;
Our strong hopes change to wild despair ;
Unheard, each pipes his favorite wail,
But no one heeds—and no one cares.

Our griefs we hide, our gladness feign ;
The face of joy, pale sorrow wears,
And, like a miser, hoards his pain,
For no one heeds—and no one cares.

Beaming and frank, Dishonor stalks
And blights pure flowers unawares ;
Men cringe before him in their walks,
And none condemns—for no one cares.

Men crouch and beg and curse and scoff,
And once a week scan various prayers,
The serious dream, the vacant laugh—
But no one heeds—and no one cares.

And Time, relentless, hurries forth,
And ruthless Death unheeding bears,
And hides our memories in the earth;
The world wags on—and no one cares.



ADA.

When the purple skies of evening
Cast their shadows on the ground,
And the solemn air of twilight
Pregnant seems with mystic sound ;
Childlike Ada, sad and thoughtful,
With her dusky eyes bent down,
By the window-ledge sits dreaming
Sunny visions all her own.

Shadows flit across her chamber,
Hover lightly on the wall,
Till they tremble at her presence,
And then vanish one and all ;
While around her rose-lips playing,
Lightly wander with her dreams,
Placid smiles of soul-lit sweetness,
Softer than the twilight gleams.

Myriads pass her where she sitteth,
Murm'rings fill the dreamy air

But she heeds no sound nor footfall,
For her thoughts are elsewhere ;
And the prelude of far music,
Wafted from the Angels' home,
Mingles with her twilight visions,
Speedeth where her fancies roam.

But when the twilight sinks and dieth,
And stars throb in Heaven's deep,
And the shroud of night in falling
Wraps the earth in death-like sleep,
Ada's dreamings are unfolded,
And with God's own seraph throng,
Angel Ada lives the visions
That on earth she dreamt so long.

And whene'er the twilight hastens,
Lulling weariness to calm,
Stealing through my earth-born musings
Like a Mandragora balm,
Childlike Ada, thoughtful, dreamy,
With her dusky eyes bent down,
From her home amid the seraphs,
Tints each vision with her own.

ONLY A PLANK.

Only a plank between us,
Between the steamer and land ;
And a farewell word is spoken
In the grasp of each outstretched hand.

A din of trade around us,
And the noise of the dusty street,
And a buzz of numerous voices
And the rush of numerous feet.

And the river flows beneath us,
And the whistle moans aloud,
And the vaporous steam that rolls along
Seems a passing mist or cloud.

And the plank that was between us,
Is silently moved away,

And the restless river bears them on,
While lingering near, we stay.

Our parting looks are blessings,
That God may guard them well ;
But when and where we shall meet again
None but God can tell.

The fervid glow of the sunset
Has softly faded away,
And shadows seem to cling and fall
Upon our earthly way.

Uncertain glimmerings on the heart,
And a sense of mystery,
That every path is vague and dim
Upon life's treacherous sea ;

That doubts and fears assail us,
And darkness and dismay ;
And the plank between the Now and Ever
May soon be moved away.

Only a plank that severs
Our dearest hopes and fears,
And the present passing from us,
And the unknown future years.

And still we linger beside it,
And dear friends come and go ;
And the restless river of life flows on
To a land no mortal may know.



LOST.

A bird warbled forth in the summer air,
And its accents floated everywhere,
 Till a poet caught the wandering strain,
 And sung it in verse to the world in vain.

A maiden carolled a human song,
And the summer zephyrs bore it along
 To her lover's heart, where it died away,
 For he would not heed the beautiful lay.

A rose had scattered its breath around,
A summer sweet without voice or sound ;
 But a child once plucked it, in all its pride,
 And the fainting flower withered and died.

For who can repeat the song of the bird ?
And hearts may be dead to the tuneful word ;
 And the sweetest charm of a summer's day,
 From our yearning hearts may be reft away.

SONG.

O we're a jolly, faithful band
Of comrades true and tried,
Who've cruised by many a rocky strand
And stemmed the storm and tide.
Our hearts are staunch, our spirits bold,
We've toiled with main and might,
And never bartered Faith for Gold
But clung to Truth and Right.

O'er many a sea we swept along
Within the self-same boat,
And in the face of tempests strong
We ever made it float ;
For one fixed purpose swayed our oars,
And so we cleaved our way,
Until we reached the welcome shores
Of proud success to-day.

Deceit has never bowed the head
In search of honors vain ;
We never fawned to earn our bread,
Nor cringed our souls for gain.
Ill luck has never chilled our blood
Nor quenched Hope's ruddy light,
But we have toiled for future good
With all our manhood's might.

And this is why we laugh at care
And live a blissful life,
For naught can e'er our strength impart,
Nor in our hearts sow strife.
Then, comrades, let us pledge once more,
Uniting heart and hand,
So that our fame may live in lore,
May echo through the land.

TO THE MEMORY OF LADY MONTE-
FIORE.

“ The pious in their death are called living.”

Dear as a mother's earliest words of love
Blessing the chequered lapse of shaded years,
So lives thy memory in Israel's heart.
The sacredness of grief doth hush and plaint,
A mist of tears doth check love's utterance—
The reverential of all thy creed.
Thou canst not die, thy goodness lives on earth,
As thy immortal spirit dwells in Heaven :
For as God blessed thee, so thy life brought blessings.
O cherished mother of an outcast race,
Yet favored children of the Almighty's love ;
Fond helpmate of a true-born, loyal Knight,
Loyal to God and holy works of love,
And to the purest, noblest charity.
For thou wert one with him, his deeds were thine :

The peril and the glory thou didst share.
Truest of friends and wisest counselor,
Dearest of friends and sweetest comforter,
Cheering the knightly pilgrim, as he trod
The dusky pathway to Moriah's mount;
And Siloah's brook and Zion's sacred hill,
Where mouldering monuments can't hide the dust
The mighty hopes of Judah's destinies—
Not to erect a toppling dynasty,
Nor empire dread, reeking ways of blood,
Instead to give the outcast Jew a home,
And scatter bounty, as God scatters winds
In spring, to swell the quickened buds with life.
If aught can crown his days with greater joy,
Than highest effort blessed with rich fruition,
Or thick warm memories of grateful hearts,
Or wide-world homage of a thankful race,
Or the pure pearl of Knighthood, England's dower,
'Tis the glad thought that a twin-kindred soul,
Given by God to sanctify his life,
With woman's gentleness and purity,
Was still his fairest, sweetest gift on earth;
So now when God with truest, infinite love,
Has taken thee from earthly eyes,

And made thy life below complete on high,
The memory of thy days, so rich in good,
Thy deeds not blazoned forth in golden words,
But traced in brightness by the Almighty's hand,
Shall calm the anguish of his widowed heart,
And free our human grief from dross of tears,
And elevate with spiritual thought, our minds,
And touch us with a tenderness and love,
Imbuing all our hearts to live like thee ;
So that the lesser compass of our lives,
And narrower scope of all our dreams and aims,
May borrow a faint loveliness from thine.



MERCHANDISE.

She moves with a swan-like tread, elate,
A woman of beautiful mien,
And low at her feet, where she rules in state,
A host of lovers is seen,
Where they sue and kneel and patiently wait
For a smile from the peerless queen.

Her braided hair forms a diadem,
Yellow as sheaves of corn,
Woven with many a glimmering gem,
Whose light is as cold as her scorn ;
When her lovers would kiss her garment's hem
And she sends them away forlorn.

There are smiles and frowns in her beautiful eyes,
Changeful as April days ;
Her words are meaningless melodies,

Whose sweetness never stays ;
And there's soft deceit in her low replies
To her lovers' vacuous praise.

The glittering spars of the frozen North,
Which no sun can ever warm,
Appear in her looks when she wanders forth
To dazzle and lure—and charm,
Or when she assumes a glance of wrath
In her pitiless smile, so calm.

Her father owns ships and cargoes of gold,
And he lives for the world and gain,
His firm, his wine and his heart are old,
And he's king in his narrow domain,
Where Fashion and Pride, burnished and cold,
In formal magnificence reign.

But the richest treasure he owns of all,
As proud as an eastern queen,
Is the glittering jewel the dealers call
A woman of beautiful mien ;
When low at her feet her lovers fall
Enslaved by her smile serene.

And numerous lovers throng the mart
Where the sale of this beauty takes place;
The first is poor with a passionate heart,
Another of noble race,
A third is a fop who dressed with art,
With a vapid, vacuous face.

But the generous one whose bid is high,
A monstrous sum to repeat,
Is a padded shape with a fishy eye,
Bedecked from his head to his feet ;
Whose whiskers are curled with exquisite dye,
Whose lisp is foreign and sweet.

His wrinkled face and his crabbed heart,
And his slow, unsteady gait,
He tries to hide with his wonderful art,
When he simpers and smiles elate
On the queen he buys in the marriage mart,
Where she rules his soul in state.

There's a blaze of light in the festive halls,
A glitter of dazzling charms,

A flowing of lace and a flutter of shawls
O'er a thousand dimpled arms,
And a whirl of mazy music that falls
O'er the flowers' exotic bloom.

And hosts of numerous satin-clad feet
To the sensuous music glide,
And voices low are whispering sweet
The name of the beautiful bride,
Which the hollow night-winds seem to repeat
In a mocking tone outside !

* * * * *



ESTHER.

Rolling through the tide of ages,
Through dark shadowy waves of years,
Linked with names of prophet-sages,
Rings a name through history's pages,
Sweet as music to our ears.

Clad in radiance, like her spirit,
Loveliest, 'mid a lovely host,
Pure as heaven she hoped to merit,
Came this maiden to inherit
Queenly power, that Vashti lost.

Loyal and true, her noble nature,
Kept the secret of her race ;
While her faith in God did teach her,
That his endless love would reach her,
Evermore, in every place.

And when thunder-clouds did lower,
O'er the land of Perse and Mede,
So that Haman's direful power
In a dark revengeful hour,
Swore destruction to her creed :

And when doleful cries were ringing,
Through the cities far and wide,
Esther's love and faith were bringing
Hopes, that to her spirit clinging,
Made her turn to God, her guide.

And her pleasures from her casting,
With her maids she knelt in prayer,
And for three long days, they, fasting,
Called on God the Everlasting
To protect her people there.

Trembling then, and lowly-hearted
Favors from the King she sought,
And her kindred's wrongs imparted
Till her supplications thwarted
All the evils Haman brought.

Therefore, is her sweet name dearer
As the dim years hurry by,
To our hearts and homes brought nearer,
As our future brightens clearer,
And old troubles fade and die.

Through the ages dim and hoary,
Through long-suffering, dreary years,
Sweeter than a poet's story,
Crowned with more than martyr's glory,
Esther's name a star appears.

And our trust in God shall arm us,
With a strength like hers of yore;
Then no Amalik's son shall harm us,
While her name still lives to charm us,
In its beauty evermore.

A WELCOME.

(Dedicated to Her Majesty's 16th Regiment, on their arrival at Montreal,
when war with America seemed imminent.)

Resound, O Land ! with gladness,
And cast off care and sadness,
As we welcome every brave and joyful voice ;
And shout hurrah ! and meet them.
With three-times-three and greet them
Till the frosty air with echoes shall rejoice.

They come to take their station,
Without a preparation,
To protect us and guard the land we love ;
To face the chills around us,
Or foes who may surround us,
And with hand and heart their fealty prove.

Ready for march when wanted,
To meet their death undaunted,

And to shield us, or to head us in the fight ;
To bear the flag of glory,
Renowned in song and story,
That shall ever triumph in the cause of Right.

Thank God the shadow round us,
Did warn but not confound us,
Till it vanished like a thunder-cloud in heaven ;
But should the azure darken,
We're ready then to hearken
And obey our country's call whene'er 'tis given.

Tho' peace and war be near us,
The soldier's tramp shall cheer us
And with strength in trial, every heart shall busy ;
O bless them as we greet them,
And with true welcome meet them,
Till the air of winter echoes with our joy.

SHADOWS IN THE CITY.

Numerous echoes flood the air
And dreamily hold their sway,
And a dim, pale radiance marks the trail,
The ebb of receding day.

The lull of human clamor,
Surcrease of toil and care,
Soften to mellow music
The din in the frosty air.

The wreaths of smoke uneasily curl
Amid the hills around,
White as the cloudy track of snow
Upon the wintry ground.

And earth-bound shadows floating
Sink and cross our way,
Like gloomy memories scattered
From the slowly fading day.

But far in the wide horizon,
A light of amber and gold,

A banner of heavenly splendor
To the vision is unrolled.

Until the ethereal radiance,
Drifting along the sky,
Is dimly blent with gauzy clouds,
Or faintly pales to die.

A chastened, waning light above,
A shadowy calm below ;
While the weary throng with silent tramp,
Like shadows, come and go.

For sun may gild and cloud may dim
Our human range of sky,
And yet in twilight hues they merge,
In twilight calm they die.

Until the star-robed night descends,
And, with a soft and mute caress,
Winds her arms o'er the sorrowing earth
With a mother's tenderness.

Making the evening's hush complete,
And the drowsy murmurs cease,
So that we thank our God for gloom
That brings us rest and peace.

FALSE.

She stands by her lonely window
And the maze of her golden hair
Is streaming, like gleams in the darkness
That closely encircles her there—
And the stars seem upbraiding her sadly,
As they gaze on the snowy breast,
That heaves with an inward struggle
With a vague and wild unrest.

She plighted her troth ; she's broken it ;
Her deep vows are sundered fore'er ;
The darkness shall harbor her secret,
Her love that is scattered in air ;
She has bowed to the golden idol ;
A puppet is hers to adore,
A simpering creature of fashion
To cherish and love evermore.

The breeze with a rippling murmur,
Sends music to sweeten the night,

The flowers are charmed in their slumbers,
And dream of the morn's golden light ;
While she hears but a gingling clamor
Of waltzes and polkas,—a din
That echoes the strife in her bosom,
And wakes the regretting within.

Again she seems whirled in the ball-room,
'Mid its gaudy glitter and light,
And her life looks as false as its tinsel,
And dark as the fathomless night :
And cold are the dread stars above her .
As they gaze on that bosom of snow !
And colder the night winds around her,
Made chill with dark hints of her woe.

Oh, enter thy lonely future,
With a heart that is callous and cold,
And pass through a show of existence,
Surrounded with glare and with gold ;
The poet may gather the sunshine,
And fold to his breast fairer flowers,
But the falseness of life makes the shadows
That brings man his care-laden hours.

FLOWERS.

When the Almighty's hand would bring
Bright hues of Heaven nigh to earth,
He spoke, and lo ! the Dawn beheld
The miracle of the flowers' birth !
And so His myriad tinted rays
Decked their frail forms with varied dress,
Until the world, like sunset skies,
Glowed with their light of loveliness.

Grateful they seemed to gaze above,
While every passing breath of air
Stirred them, until from out their hearts
Came fragrant incense, like a prayer ;
And when at night the inconstant moon,
Made every petal bright,
The dewdrops glistening on their leaves
Seemed like pure tearlets of delight.

And so I've watched their opening buds
Expanding sacred tints like Heaven,
Or bathed with sunset's virgin gold,
Their dainty lids half-closed at even ;
Until I never knew a flower
That did not seem with pretty wile
Striving to keep me in its power,
As if to charm me with its smile.



L'ENVOI.

Leave me, O ye fancies,
And wander where ye will,
And my hopes shall make the music
In the lingering echoes still.

The now may hold no promise,
The past is dim and vain,
But every thought that haunts me
Will shape itself again.

In garb more fair and comely,
In colors lovelier far,
When all God's truths are clearer,
And my visions loftier are.

When a noble purpose guides me
Along life's mazy road,

And its lessons bring me nearer
To the wondrous ways of God.

When the pulses of my being
Throb with fires, more pure and true,
And life takes grander meanings
From the promised land in view.

For we all stand on Mount Pisgah,
And Hope is pointing there
To a world of glorious promise,
To an ideal, wondrous fair.

And tho' eyes weep with watching,
And hearts are aching still,
Our visions make life's music,
Let them wander where they will.





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